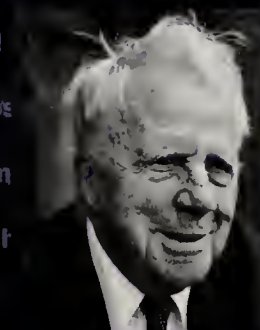
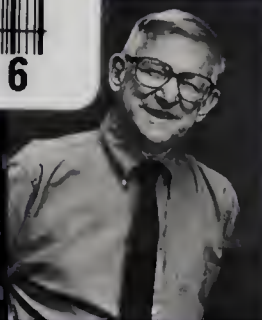
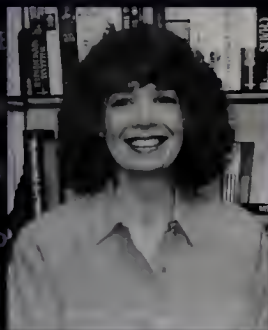


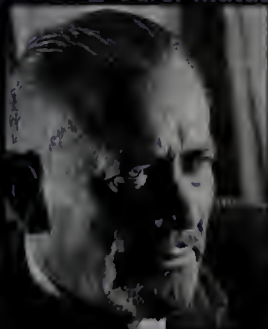
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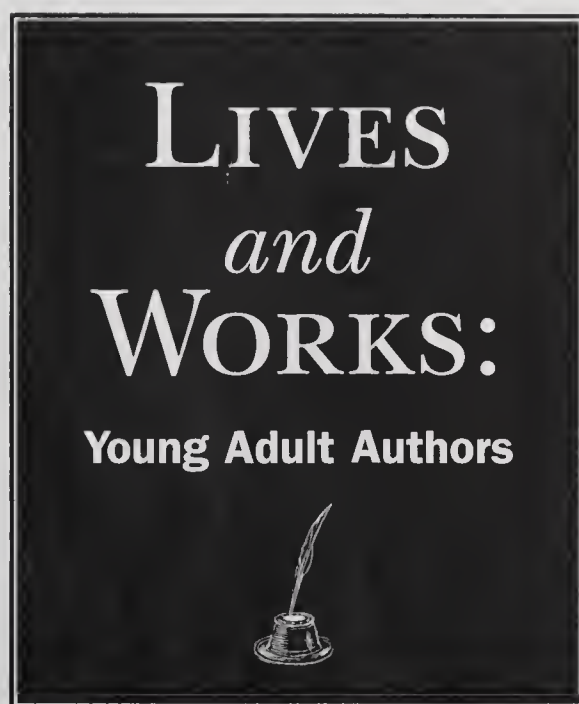


Volume 3
Dickinson, Emily—Hahn, Mary Downing

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Volume 3

Dickinson, Emily—Hahn, Mary Downing



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Preface

One of the earliest memories of my childhood is sitting in first grade making the sounds of the letters of the alphabet. The entire class would pronounce the sounds over and over. Then we were asked to put the letters and sounds together to make a word, then to put the words together to make a sentence, and then the sentences together to make a story. The transformation from sounds to story was like magic.

I have never forgotten the thrill I felt when I read a story by myself for the very first time. And even though many years have passed, I confess to feeling that same wonderment today when I pick up a book, open to the first page, and begin to read.

Because reading has been my passion and my joy, it came as no surprise to my friends when I became a librarian, surrounded by books. Next to reading, I find that sharing a book—with a friend, a colleague, or a library patron—is one of life's great pleasures. In a way the publication of *Lives and Works: Young Adult Authors* is like sharing a book. It will reacquaint you with classic writers who have stood the test of time and introduce you to today's authors who are writing cutting-edge fiction and nonfiction for teens. That is why I'm so pleased with these volumes: Their content focuses not only on books but on the lives of the writers behind the stories. Reading about these authors' backgrounds adds a dimension to the experience, where writing comes alive. I envy you the opportunity to discover these extraordinary authors. Here's to many hours of reading pleasure!

Marilee Foglesong
Young Adult Coordinator for Manhattan Libraries
June 1998

Editors' Note: At the end of each author's profile readers will find a list of works by that author for further reading. Where appropriate, works *about* an author also appear.

At the end of many profiles readers will find a Web site address for information about the author. Where a Web site address is not available for a particular author, readers can access the Web site of the author's publisher for more information about the author.

In the course of an entry a name in all capital letters signifies that readers can find an entry about that author in *Lives and Works*.



“ If I read a book [and] it makes my whole body so cold no fire ever can warm me, I know *that* is poetry. If I feel physically as if the top of my head were taken off, I know *that* is poetry. ”

Comment by Emily Dickinson to Thomas Wentworth Higginson, August 1870

Emily Dickinson {1830–86}

Life

TODAY THERE is little doubt that Emily Elizabeth Dickinson is one of the great American poets, but at the time of her death at age fifty-five the poet had withdrawn from the larger world and was virtually unknown outside of her native village, Amherst, Massachusetts. While the facts of her outward life are simple, although eccentric, her inward life was intense.

Born on December 10, 1830, Emily Dickinson was the middle child of Edward and Emily Dickinson. Her father was a prominent citizen in Amherst: treasurer of Amherst

College, a Massachusetts legislator, a U.S. congressman for a term, and an opponent of alcohol. Dickinson described her father by observing that he “only reads on Sunday—he reads *lonely & rigorous* books.” About her family she wrote in 1862, “I have a Brother and Sister—My Mother does not care for thought—and Father, too busy with his Briefs—to notice what we do.” Only after her mother became an invalid in 1875 did Emily develop any affection for her. Her closest relationships were with her younger sister, Lavinia, who discovered a

number of Emily's poems gathered in little hand-sewn booklets in a locked box after her death, and with her devoted older brother, Austin, who lived next door after he married and whose home provided Emily with perhaps the only gaiety she ever knew.

Dickinson rarely left Amherst. In 1847 she enrolled in Mount Holyoke Female Seminary in nearby South Hadley, but poor health often interrupted her education, and she returned home to the surroundings she knew. She made brief visits to Boston (to seek medical treatment for an eye problem), Philadelphia, and Washington, but after around 1872 she secluded herself in her house and garden. There she cared for her mother, baked bread, grew flowers, and dressed almost always in white. She communicated with people mostly through letters, cards, and notes that she attached to batches of cookies. She took little interest in the outside world and once asked if the war with Mexico was over—and who had won.

Although she was almost a mythological figure in Amherst (children knocked on the door just to get a glimpse of her), she

had few personal relationships outside her family. Chief among her friends was Thomas Wentworth Higginson, an essayist, lecturer, and literary critic. In 1862 Emily had written a letter to him in response to his article, published in the *Atlantic Monthly* magazine, giving advice to authors. She had enclosed several of her poems, asking, "Are you too deeply occupied to say if my Verse is alive. The Mind is so near itself—it cannot see, distinctly—and I have none to ask—." Thus began a correspondence that lasted the rest of Dickinson's life; she saw Higginson as a mentor, or adviser.

Her earliest romantic attachment was to the Reverend Charles Wadsworth, who functioned as a spiritual adviser and who may have broken her heart when he moved to San Francisco. Later she appears to have loved Judge Otis P. Lord for six years until his death in 1884—although she turned down a proposal of marriage from him. She was also close to Samuel Bowles, the editor of the *Springfield Daily Republican* newspaper, and to Benjamin Franklin Newton, a law clerk in her father's office, who taught her "a faith in things unseen." A psychologist might theorize that in these

relationships with older, more worldly men, she was searching for the kindly father she never had.

Dickinson's last years were marked by declining health and weakness. She died in Amherst of a kidney disease on May 15, 1886.

In 1890 Higginson worked with Mabel Loomis Todd in bringing out the first published edition of Dickinson's poems, a collection of 116 (out of 1,775 poems) that the two edited together. The body of her work was divided after 1896, when Lavinia quarreled with Todd. The unpublished poems in Lavinia's possession passed to Emily's niece, who later brought out several editions of them. Those in Todd's possession remained so until her daughter published 650 of them in 1945. These early editions of the poems included misguided efforts to "correct" their eccentric punctuation and style. The first collected edition, *The Poems of Emily Dickinson*, was not published until 1955. This collection, edited by Thomas H. Johnson, restored Dickinson's original punctuation and word choices. Dickinson's reputation as a poet become established only

slowly as this rich body of work became public.

Works

In the 1860s Dickinson was writing her brief poems at the rate of about one a day. She drew heavily on classical myths, the Bible, SHAKESPEARE, and the rhythms and diction of the Protestant hymnals she read. But her sources seem beside the point; the poems are startlingly original, relying on the unexpected placement of common words, challenging sentence structure, grammatical inventiveness, and the eccentric use of dashes.

It is difficult to summarize such a vast and varied body of work. Some have tried to categorize her poems, pointing out that Dickinson frequently returns to such subjects as love, nature, friendship, and immortality. But this type of classification scheme misses the appeal of her poems. Readers like Dickinson's poetry because she focuses on inward experience, describes the tiny details of daily life in imaginative ways, uses language to challenge the boundaries of experience ("The Brain—is wider than the Sky—"),

and poses stark philosophical questions and answers them with ambiguous, uncertain responses. So, for example, a reader could use some of her poems to “prove” that she was a devout Christian, others to “prove” that she was skeptical about religion. In fact, though, she could be each of these at various times and in different moods. If anything unites the poems, it is the way the poet wrestles with the puzzle of human life itself. She writes about the freedom of the mind to explore but also the limit put on the mind by the passing of time.

Some of the poems are profoundly optimistic. She talks, for example, about reeling through “endless summer days.” Others take a more despairing, somber stance, such as when she writes about cathedral tunes that “oppress.” Some focus on her need for isolation, for maintaining a private, inward life, when “The Soul selects her own Society.” Still others reflect her preoccupation with Death, the ultimate trap of Time. But tempering this preoccupation was the possibility of immortality, expressed in her famous line “Because I could not stop for Death.”

For Emily Dickinson, the

essential tragedy was that the “sweetness of life” is to know that “it will never come again.” By capturing that sweetness as she did, she could make her readers appreciate it all the more.

WORK BY
EMILY DICKINSON

The Complete Poems of Emily Dickinson.
Edited by Thomas H. Johnson.

SELECTED WORKS ABOUT
EMILY DICKINSON

Green, Carol. *Emily Dickinson: American Poet.* Chicago: Children's Press, 1994.

Thayer, Bonita E. *Emily Dickinson.* New York: Watt, 1989.



“Papp . . . crawled to the tree and knocked his head against the trunk and chanted and drew signs with his bush knife in the earth between the spreading buttresses that led down to the roots. . . .

‘It’s his ancestor tree,’ said Michael. ‘The clan puts things up there for the ancestors to look after.’

‘But Papp’s a Christian.’

‘He says if our Lord had lived in the [African] bush he’d have needed an ancestor tree.’ ”

Michael and Paul Kogami, in AK

Peter Dickinson {1927–}

Life

PETER DICKINSON’S novel *AK* (1990) is set in Nagala, a fictional African nation. Though fictional, Nagala “provides the reader with an exceptionally vivid picture of an African country,” according to a reviewer writing in *Publishers Weekly* magazine. The accuracy of the portrait is due in part to the fact that Dickinson himself was born of English parents in Northern Rhodesia (now known as Zambia) on December 16, 1927.

In 1935 the Dickinson family returned to England. Not long after, Dickinson’s father died, leaving the family in a difficult financial situation. Still, Dickin-

son’s mother was able to scrape money together to send her son to boarding school, where he did well enough to win a scholarship to Eton, the prestigious secondary school located just west of London, England. After leaving Eton, Dickinson served for a time in the British army. He then attended Cambridge University, graduating in 1951 with a degree in English literature.

After college Dickinson applied for a job with *Punch*, the foremost British humor magazine. On his way to his interview Dickinson was hit by a streetcar. Though he was covered with blood, he con-

tinued on his way—and got the job. Dickinson worked for *Punch* for seventeen years as an assistant editor and reviewer of crime novels. One day, Dickinson said, he got an idea for a crime novel of his own and decided to try his hand at becoming an author.

In 1968 Dickinson published his first novel, *Skin Deep*. While he was working on that, he had an idea for another novel. This turned out to be his first novel for young adults, *The Weathermonger* (1969).

Dickinson continued to follow this pattern, alternating crime novels with young adult novels.

Dickinson married ROBIN MCKINLEY, who also writes for young adult readers.

Works

Dickinson wrote historical novels, fantasy, realistic fiction, mysteries, and futuristic fiction. His novels deal with politics, archaeology, the study of primates, language and communication, opera, ancient Egypt, Buddhism, psychic phenomena, the environment, and neurology.

The central character in a Dickinson novel is often a teenage girl. Dickinson told *Publishers Weekly* that he preferred

female protagonists because “women are much more observant. I think that girls are much more aware of social matters than boys, and therefore make much more interesting observers.”

As different as his novels are, Dickinson does repeat some central themes and ideas. Several of his stories center on humankind’s disregard for nature and natural habitats. *Eva* (1988), for example, is set in a chilling future where people are packed by the millions into steel and glass cities, where most vegetation and animal life are extinct, and where “nine-tenths of the world’s population [is] holed up in their apartments twenty-four hours a day watching the shaper [3-D television].” In the novel he questions the use of animals for medical experiments and highlights the complex communicative and social lives of chimpanzees. Dealing with nature from another angle in *A Bone from a Dry Sea* (1992), Dickinson portrays an idyllic relationship between early humans and dolphins.

Language is another important theme in Dickinson’s work. More than half his books are concerned, in one way or another, with the inability of one character to understand the language of another. For example, in *A Bone*

from *a Dry Sea* Dickinson portrays two archaeologists who rub each other the wrong way because one tends to be precise in his descriptions and the other tends to exaggerate. In *AK*, quoted above, the author invents a country with several languages that threaten to become barriers to national unity. And in *Eva* he imagines a creature who is part chimpanzee and part human and who must try to translate between species.

Many of Dickinson's interests come together in *Eva*. Eva Adamson is the blonde-haired, blue-eyed, thirteen-year-old daughter of a scientist who breeds chimpanzees for research. After she is critically injured in a car accident, her "neural memory" is implanted in a chimpanzee. As her father explains, this process isn't as simple as putting a human brain in a chimp's body: "When you think, you think with a human mind. When you blink, you blink with a chimpanzee's involuntary reaction. Your own unconscious mind lies along the border."

Eva senses this unconscious borderland even before she is fully aware of her new body. When she awakens, she has been dreaming of trees—lush forests full of greenery, such as no longer exist in the world of the near future in which she lives. The only trees left

are "city trees, tamed, guarded, numbered, precious." Yet she dreams about something neither she nor the chimpanzee whose body she inhabits has ever seen.

As she learns to live in her new body, Eva finds that many of her feelings have changed. She wants to spend time with other chimps. Like chimpanzees, she wants to groom and be groomed. And she begins to resent the fact that humans feel free to take nonhuman lives in the interest of research. She does not lose her human intelligence or knowledge; it is merely amplified by her newfound feelings and instincts.

Many critics consider Eva an intensely admirable character. She is physically and morally strong. She is clever. And she has the courage to do what's right.



SELECTED WORKS BY PETER DICKINSON

AK

The Blue Hawk

A Bone from a Dry Sea

The Changes trilogy: *The Devil's Children*,
Heartsease, *The Weathermonger*

Eva

The Gift

The Lion Tamer's Daughter and Other Stories

The Seventh Raven

Shadow of a Hero

Tulku



“ The second before the sun went out, we saw a wall of dark shadow come speeding at us. . . . This wave of shadow moves at 1,800 miles an hour. . . . Seeing it, and knowing it was coming straight for you, was like feeling a slug of anesthetic shoot up your arm. If you think very fast, you may have time to think: Soon it will hit my brain. . . . You can feel the appalling, inhuman speed of your own blood. We saw the wall of shadow coming, and screamed before it hit. ”

from “TOTAL ECLIPSE”

Annie Dillard {1945–}

Life

NO ONE describes immensity better than Annie Dillard. She has a child’s fascination with facts and details; she looks and looks and can’t get enough. And she has a poet’s way with words: Her writing is filled to overflowing with vivid images and apt metaphors. While Dillard has written fiction, poetry, and an autobiography, she is probably best known as an essayist who writes passionately about discovering God in and through nature.

Dillard was born Meta Ann Doaks in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, on April 30, 1945. Her

mother, Pamela Lambert, was an intense, wisecracking, committed, unstoppable woman. Her father, Frank Doaks, was a member of the family who founded the American Standard Company. Like his wife, he was very much his own person. When Dillard was ten, her father left the family business, bought a boat, and attempted to navigate the Mississippi, inspired by his favorite book, MARK TWAIN’s *Life on the Mississippi*. He hoped to reach New Orleans but ended up selling the boat in Louisville, Kentucky, and flying home.

Even as a young child,

Dillard was fascinated with nature. Her favorite book, which she borrowed from the local neighborhood library over and over again, was *The Field Book of Ponds and Streams*. She was amazed to find, by looking at the many stamps in the back of the book, that others had read it too—that “the people of Homewood [her neighborhood in Pittsburgh], some of whom lived in visible poverty, on crowded streets among burned out houses . . . dreamed of ponds and streams.”

After graduation from high school Dillard attended Hollins College near Roanoke, Virginia. She graduated in 1967 with a degree in English. Just after her sophomore year she had married one of her teachers, Richard Henry Wilde Dillard. They were married for ten years, and Richard Dillard had a major impact on his wife’s work.

A near-fatal illness in 1971 motivated Dillard to spend more time out of doors, and she took many camping trips in and around Tinker Creek in Virginia’s Roanoke Valley. Her writings were collected and published in 1974 as *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek*, for which Dillard was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for nonfiction.

After *Pilgrim* was published, Dillard and her husband were divorced. Dillard was unpleasantly surprised by the attention she received as a result of the Pulitzer and decided to move to the Pacific Northwest. She worked as a writer-in-residence at Western Washington University in Bellingham, Washington, and married Gary Clevidence in 1980. Dillard and Clevidence were divorced in 1988, and in the same year she married Robert Richardson. Dillard continued her writing and academic career as writer-in-residence at Wesleyan University in Middletown, Connecticut.

Works

Pilgrim at Tinker Creek is a multi-layered work. On one level it is a journal of a year of intense observation of nature through four seasons. Dillard writes about sitting under a sycamore tree day after day and watching things she had never seen before. She picks up a cocoonlike object and sees “a tiny spider, yellowish but so infinitesimal it was translucent, waving each of its eight legs in what was clearly threat behavior.” She looks up at an infinity of stars and down at the

tiny swarming creatures that live below the level of our senses.

Pilgrim is also a collection of odd and wonderful facts, sort of like a freak show between covers. Dillard tells bizarre tales that she gathered while researching natural phenomena. She describes, for example, the "Cone-nose bug, or kissing bug, [which] bites the lips of sleeping people, sucking blood and injecting an excruciating toxin."

But Dillard herself said that *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek* is first and foremost a work of theology. Through exploring the beauty and intricacy of nature, Dillard finds the hand of a creator. She marvels that "there are two-hundred and twenty-eight separate and distinct muscles in the head of an ordinary caterpillar," and she provides example after example to demonstrate that the "creation is not a study, a roughed-in sketch; it is supremely meticulously created, created abundantly, extravagantly, and in fine."

Critics either love or hate Dillard's style. Most feel she is a master stylist and that she uses many poetic techniques to make her writing vivid and exceptionally concrete, despite the fact that her subject matter is often quite abstract. However, Charles

Deemer in *New Leader* disagrees and notes that "her observations are typically described in overstatement reaching toward hysteria." There is no question that Dillard shouts and exaggerates. Like prophets and mystics always have, she makes lots of noise to wake the sleeping.

SELECTED WORKS
BY ANNIE DILLARD

An American Childhood

Holy the Firm

The Living

Pilgrim at Tinker Creek

*Teaching a Stone to Talk: Expeditions
and Encounters*

SELECTED WORKS
ABOUT ANNIE DILLARD

Chambers, Andrea. "Annie Dillard: Her Pilgrimage This Time Is into Her Past." *People*, 19 October 1987.

Sanoff, Alvin P. "Remembrances of Things Past." *U.S. News and World Reports*, 16 November 1987.

Smith, Linda L. *Annie Dillard*. New York: Twayne, 1991.



“ ‘You tell your secrets, and I’ll tell mine,’ said Granny Dorothy. ‘I’ll tell you something that Albert doesn’t know, even. My best secret.’ ”

Granny Dorothy, in GRANNY WAS A BUFFER GIRL

Berlie Doherty {1943–}

Life

BERLIE DOHERTY always had an interest in literature. She was born to an Irish Catholic family on November 6, 1943, in Liverpool, England. When she was four, the family moved to a small seaside village in western England, where she attended a convent school. Her father, a railway clerk, read her bedtime stories, and at age five she decided that making up stories sounded like a good calling in life. Her father also loved to write poetry and short stories, and by her high school years Doherty was following his example. Doherty never stopped reading; books such as *Little Women*, *Heidi*,

My Secret Garden, and the novels of CHARLES DICKENS were among her favorites.

At age sixteen Doherty was invited to the home of her high school English teacher, whose attention was caught by stories Doherty had written in school. The walls of her teacher’s study were lined with books, and the teacher invited Doherty to take home as many as she wanted to read. Doherty left with an armload of volumes by British and American playwrights. Never having read or even seen a play, she was astonished to discover dramatic literature. Perhaps that day

Doherty's path in life was laid: playwright and author of stories for children and young adults.

Doherty earned a degree in English from the University of Durham in England in 1964. She continued her education by earning a certificate (similar to a master's degree) in social sciences from the University of Liverpool a year later. Her first job was as a child-care officer for a social-services agency. She married in 1966, and in 1967 she left the workforce to raise three children. She still found time, though, to earn another certificate, this one in education, and in 1978 she took a job as an English teacher in Sheffield, England.

Doherty's writing career got under way during the 1970s. In 1980 BBC-Radio (the British national radio network) produced one of her radio plays, and theaters in the Sheffield area produced several of her stage plays. Her first published work was *How Green You Are!* (1982), an interwoven collection of short story-like episodes that had originally been broadcast on radio. When a similar book of hers, *The Making of Fingers Finnigan* (1983), was published, Doherty decided to devote herself full time to writing. She is best known for her novels for young adults, including two win-

ners of the prestigious Carnegie Medal: *Granny Was a Buffer Girl* (1986) and *Dear Nobody* (1991).

Works

Doherty's works for young adults have several features in common. First, the books contain realistic characters, especially the young female narrators. Second, the author creates evocative settings, whether the fields and farms of the west coast of Britain, where the author grew up, or the streets of cities like Sheffield, where she eventually settled. Finally, Doherty's books have an episodic structure, no doubt the result of her early interest in plays and playwrights and her writing of stage, radio, and television plays.

Set in a small seaside town, the stories in *How Green You Are!* treat the daily lives of four average teenagers, along with their friends and relatives. Some of the stories are funny, others sad. In one Bee takes care of a violinist who is fleeing Russia to live in England; in another Marie's pet monkey is shot by the police when it gets rabies; in a third Kevin and a friend have to be rescued when they are caught in a tide while boating. *The Making of Fingers Finnigan* continues the adventures

of this group of characters. One story describes their attempt to save a decrepit community swimming pool; in another Robert is accidentally locked in a movie theater and has to be rescued by a local small-time crook, Fingers Finnigan. *White Peak Farm* (1984), originally written as a radio serial, continues the pattern.

One of Doherty's most popular books is *Granny Was a Buffer Girl*, which breaks with the author's earlier books by moving to a more urban setting, Sheffield, where her grandmother had operated a buffing, or polishing, wheel in a silverware factory. At the center of the book is Jess, who is about to leave home to spend a year studying in France. Three generations of her working-class family gather to wish her well before her departure. As they reminisce, Jess learns for the first time some of the past events that shaped her family—and her: one grandfather's life as a steelworker, the obstacles her other grandparents had to overcome to get married, her parents' courage in dealing with the handicap and premature death of Jess's older brother.

With *Dear Nobody* Doherty adopted a more traditional novel format to tackle a tough, contemporary issue: teenage pregnancy. The novel is divided into nine

chapters, each one representing a month in the pregnancy of a teenager named Helen. The title is taken from a series of letters that the mother writes to her unborn child, addressed to "Dear Nobody." The book expresses the feelings not only of the fearful and bewildered mother-to-be but also of the father, Chris, and of their parents and grandparents. Helen and Chris grow closer to their own parents as they explore what parenthood really means.

Doherty encouraged young writers to experiment with different literary forms, as she herself had done. She pointed out, for instance, that the kind of language used in poetry can improve prose writing, while learning to write the dialogue used in plays can improve the speech of characters in short stories.

SELECTED WORKS
BY BERLIE DOHERTY

Children of Winter

Daughter of the Sea

Dear Nobody

Granny Was a Buffer Girl

How Green You Are!

The Making of Fingers Finnigan

The Snake-Stone

Walking on Air

White Peak Farm



“ My father didn’t want the guests to come any more than I did. He liked our family time, too. He didn’t need the extra work. He felt uncomfortable around strangers—he just wasn’t permitted to show it. I could run away because I was still a boy, but he, a man, had to stay, had to do what was obliged of him, had to obey rules . . . because if he didn’t he’d be wrong in his own eyes.

I didn’t know how to say to him all the things I felt, and that made me feel them all the stronger.”

Moss, in *GUESTS*

Michael Dorris {1945–97}

Life

As a single man, Michael Dorris adopted three Native-American children and raised them on his own for many years until he married writer Louise Erdrich in 1981. With Erdrich, Dorris had three more children. It is no exaggeration to say that fatherhood was extremely important to Dorris, perhaps partly because he never knew his own father.

Dorris was born January 30, 1945, in Louisville, Kentucky. As he explains in *Paper Trail* (1995), a collection of essays, he was “raised by two grandmothers, three aunts, and a mother, all of whom were very strong women.”

Dorris’s father, Jim, was a career army officer. He was killed in a jeep accident in Germany at the age of twenty-seven, when Dorris was two. Dorris’s mother, Mary Besy, worked as a seamstress.

As a boy, Dorris says in *Paper Trail*, he was interested in reading, history, and folk music.

At the time there was nobody nearby who seemed to care about any of those things, and I felt lonely and hopelessly weird. *Unpopular* is too kind a word to describe my status. I was the kind of kid who wore glasses from the second grade on and never took them off, the kind who got his homework in on the day it was due

(sometimes typed), the kind who could not catch a ball even when it fell into his baseball glove.

Dorris attended Georgetown University in Washington, D.C., and graduated with a degree in English in 1967. He studied history and anthropology at Yale University and received his master's degree in 1971 after doing fieldwork in Alaska.

Dorris was part Medoc Indian on his father's side. (The Medoc, or Modoc, tribe is one of two branches of the Lutuami; the other is the Klamath tribe. These tribes were originally located primarily in what is now southeastern Oregon.) Motivated in part by this Native-American heritage, in 1971 Dorris adopted a three-year-old Native-American child, whom he named Abel. Over the next five years Dorris adopted two other Native-American children, Jeffrey (also called Sava) and Madeline.

In the early 1970s Dorris took a teaching position at Dartmouth College in New Hampshire. In 1979 he founded the Native-American Studies Department there.

Shortly after his fourth birthday Dorris's son Abel began to have epileptic seizures.

He also suffered delays in normal development, which Dorris attributed to the fact that Abel had been severely abused before his adoption. But in 1982, while on a visit to a South Dakota reservation, Dorris was startled to find two boys who looked almost exactly like his son Abel. He learned that these boys, who suffered many of the same difficulties as his son, were victims of Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS), a condition caused by alcohol consumed during pregnancy. Dorris knew that Abel's mother had died of alcohol poisoning, but he had not been aware of the damage alcohol can do to an unborn child. In addition to seizures FAS children can have skeletal abnormalities and problems with vision, movement, and behavior.

Dorris began to research Fetal Alcohol Syndrome and in 1989 published the work for which he is best known, *The Broken Cord*, a comprehensive study of the syndrome. It was also the touching story of his own and his son's struggles with the condition. *The Broken Cord* won the National Book Critics Circle Award and was made into a television movie in 1992.

Also in 1992 Dorris published his first book for younger

readers, *Morning Girl*, which won the Scott O'Dell Award for Historical Fiction. He continued to publish both fiction and nonfiction for adults and in 1994 wrote his second book for younger readers, *Guests*. A third children's book was published in 1996, *Sees Behind Trees*.

In 1991 Dorris's son Abel was hit by a truck and killed. Dorris was brokenhearted, and the chronic depression he had suffered from for many years deepened. His other two adopted children, also victims of FAS, led very troubled lives. In 1994 Dorris's son, Jeffrey, threatened Dorris in order to try to get money from him. Then, in 1996, Dorris and his wife separated. A friend quoted in *People* magazine described Dorris as "devastated." Another friend said, "He was very, very unhappy in a way I hope you and I never, never know."

On Good Friday 1997 Dorris attempted suicide. He was found by a friend who called the police. Dorris checked himself into a psychiatric hospital, where his spirits seemed to improve. He even began writing a new children's book. However, on April 10 Dorris left on a pass, drove to a motel, and took his own life.

Works

The idea for *Morning Girl* came to Dorris as a result of reading Christopher Columbus's diary. When Christopher Columbus and his crew arrived in the Bahamas on October 11, 1492, they were greeted by Taino Indians. Columbus notes that he saw "one very young girl," and this observation led Dorris to wonder who this girl might have been.

Morning Girl, the result of Dorris's speculation, is narrated in alternating chapters by a sister and brother, Morning Girl and Star Boy. These children are literally as different as night and day. Morning Girl says, "I don't know how my brother came to see everything so upside down from me. For him, night is day, sleep is awake. It's as though time is split between us."

The Taino live in a paradise on the brink of destruction by "the bad visitors, their bodies painted white for death . . . in three big rafts to the south of the nearest island." Especially poignant are the patience, respect, and wisdom with which parents among these people treat children. When Star Boy loses his father's canoe, he runs away and hides, imagining himself a rock.

Believing no one notices him, he listens as each member of his family stands beside him wondering out loud where he can be. His mother says, "Star Boy would not leave without saying good-bye. . . . Even if he had made a mistake . . . he would know that we would miss him too much if he disappeared." Later his father lets it slip that the canoe has been found. When Star Boy reveals himself, his father greets him joyfully. "I unfolded myself," Star Boy says, "became my father's son again because I heard the pleasure in his voice." The lesson is learned, gently.

Charming too is the freedom children in this story have to rediscover and rename themselves as they grow and change. Star Boy's first name is Hungry. But he wants to be seen as different from his childish self and from his older sister. So he declares himself a lover of night. His family responds with gentle teasing: Perhaps he is a bat? Then his father says,

"Why *don't* bats sleep at night? Perhaps they like the same things as Star Boy does."

Star Boy.

That was the first time I heard my new name. . . . No one spoke as we all listened, tested the weight of the words.

His new name inspires the boy to want to "be an expert, a person

who would be asked questions about the night and who would know the answers."

Dorris's style is simple and poetic. He and his wife collaborated extensively on all their writing and were their own toughest critics. Dorris says in *Conversations with Louise Erdrich and Michael Dorris*, "We read the whole book out loud to each other. That's when we insert words, do the real fine-tuning. . . . When . . . [the book goes] to the publisher, almost no editing is needed."

SELECTED WORKS

BY MICHAEL DORRIS

The Broken Cord

Guests

Morning Girl

Paper Trail

Sees Behind Trees

A Yellow Raft in Blue Water

SELECTED WORKS

ABOUT MICHAEL DORRIS

Chavkin, Allan, and Nancy Feyl Chavkin. *Conversations with Louise Erdrich and Michael Dorris*. Jackson: University of Mississippi Press, 1994.

Fung, Shirley, and Erin Richter. "Deaths." *Entertainment Weekly*, 25 April 1997.

Glick, Elizabeth. "An Imperfect Union," *Time*, 28 April 1997.

Stone, Brad. "In the Best of Families." *Newsweek*, 16 June 1997.



“The existence of slavery in this country brands your republicanism as a sham, your humanity as a base pretense and your Christianity as a lie. It destroys your moral power abroad; it corrupts your politicians at home. It saps the foundation of religion; it makes your name a hissing and a byword to a mocking earth.”

Frederick Douglass, Fourth of July speech in Rochester, New York, 1852

Frederick Douglass {1818(?)–95}

Life

FREDERICK DOUGLASS'S compelling autobiography stands out in the history of the emancipation of American slaves in the mid-1880s.

Douglass was born Frederick Augustus Washington Bailey in Tuckahoe, Maryland, on or about February 7, 1818 (Douglass himself was uncertain of his age). His mother, part Native American, was a slave, and he was separated from her as an infant; he never knew his white father. As a child he lived with his grandmother on a Maryland plantation, working as a servant and field hand and along the way teaching himself to

read and write. In 1836 while still a slave he was apprenticed to a shipyard in Baltimore, but in 1838, disguising himself as a sailor and aided by Anna Murray, a free black woman he would later marry, he fled to New York City and then to Massachusetts. There he changed his name to Douglass to escape slave hunters, and for three years he worked as a laborer.

The year 1841 marked a turning point in Douglass's life and indeed in the life of the abolitionist, or antislavery, movement: He was asked to speak at an antislavery convention about his experiences as a slave. He spoke so

eloquently that he was given a position as an agent for the Massachusetts Antislavery Society, and he lectured widely throughout the North. Many skeptics, though, doubted that such a man could ever have been a slave. To convince them that he had been, he wrote *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave* (1845). He later revised and enlarged this autobiography, publishing it under the title *My Bondage and My Freedom* (1855). Finally, in 1881 he published *Life and Times of Frederick Douglass*, which includes and expands on the earlier versions.

Douglass's life was nothing if not eventful. Fearing for his freedom after the 1845 publication of his autobiography, he left the United States for a two-year speaking tour of England and Ireland. He returned to the United States with enough money, \$700, to buy his freedom. He then cofounded an antislavery newspaper, called *North Star*, in Rochester, New York. The paper's inaugural issue came out in December 1847, and Douglass published it until 1860 (after 1851 under the title *Frederick Douglass' Paper*). In 1859 Douglass was falsely accused of involvement in the raid on the federal arsenal at Harpers Ferry, Virginia. The accusation caused Douglass to flee to Canada and

later to England; he returned to the United States in 1860.

When the Civil War began, Douglass campaigned to make black men (including his two sons) eligible for service in the Union army. Then as a consultant to President Abraham Lincoln and a frequent visitor at the White House he protested when black soldiers did not receive equal pay and treatment. During the Reconstruction period following the war he was highly critical of Lincoln's successors, arguing that the government was not promptly and justly addressing the plight of former slaves.

Frederick Douglass died of heart failure on February 20, 1895, in Washington, D.C.

Works

Frederick Douglass told his life story in three autobiographies, each later one expanding and enlarging the earlier versions. The first, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*, bears many similarities to other slave narratives written during the middle years of the nineteenth century. For most readers the narrative is a deeply moving account of Douglass's early life as a slave in Maryland. It emphasizes his lack of roots from

knowing little of his parents and stresses the brutality he suffered as he grew from a child to a young man. Central to the account is his recognition at age seven that he is a slave. He details the beatings that he and others received at the hands of one Mr. Plummer, his overseer, “always armed with a cowskin [whip] and heavy cudgel.” He also describes how his owner, Thomas Auld of Baltimore, put a stop to Mrs. Auld’s efforts to teach Douglass to read, saying, “If you teach that nigger . . . how to read, there would be no keeping him. It would forever unfit him to be a slave. . . . It would make him discontented and unhappy.” Douglass later actively promoted literacy as a way for blacks to seize freedom.

Later versions of the autobiography furnish greater detail. In the 1855 *My Bondage and My Freedom*, for example, Douglass describes how Auld sent him while still a teenager to Edward Covey, a notorious “slave breaker.” Like others of his ilk, Covey operated a kind of boot camp designed to break defiant slaves and return them to their owners with a more docile and compliant temper, at least on the surface. Douglass describes how he was worked mercilessly and endured weekly whippings for no apparent reason. He

escaped and returned to his master, but Auld refused to believe he was being mistreated and sent him back to Covey. When Covey attacked him, Douglass refused to submit and fought back.

Readers of Douglass’s autobiographies are unanimously struck by the simple, straightforward eloquence of their style and the author’s ability to use simple but powerful metaphors (“smoldering embers of liberty,” “dark and pestiferous tomb of slavery”) to universalize his experiences.

WORK BY

FREDERICK DOUGLASS

Life and Times of Frederick Douglass,
Written by Himself

WORKS ABOUT

FREDERICK DOUGLASS

Foner, Philip S. *Frederick Douglass: A Biography*. New York: Citadel Press, 1964.

Huggins, Nathan I. *Slave and Citizen: The Life of Frederick Douglass*. Boston: Little, Brown, 1980.

WEB SITE

<<http://www.citycom/fddesigns/fldouglinks.html>>



“ In glancing over my notes of the seventy odd cases in which I have during the last eight years studied the methods of my friend Sherlock Holmes, I find many tragic, some comic, a large number merely strange, but none commonplace; for, working as he did rather for the love of his art than for the acquirement of wealth, he refused to associate himself with any investigation which did not tend towards the unusual, and even the fantastic. ”

Dr. Watson, in “THE ADVENTURE OF THE SPECKLED BAND”

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle {1859–1930}

Life

LIKE HIS famous character, Sherlock Holmes, Arthur Conan Doyle had interests that tended “towards the unusual, and even the fantastic.” The author, however, did have to work for the “acquirement of wealth” or at least for financial survival.

Doyle was born in Edinburgh, Scotland, May 22, 1859, into a talented and artistic family. His father was an illustrator and a civil servant. His mother was a French scholar with a noble family background. She taught her son about historic battles and especially about the courtly values of the Middle Ages. At

first, Doyle planned a career in medicine and studied at the University of Edinburgh. Though he had several short stories published while in school, he was more interested in science.

While a student Doyle became fascinated by the belief system called spiritualism and rejected his family’s Catholic faith. He believed that the spirits of the dead could be reached through a person known as a medium. Later in life he wrote and lectured on spiritualism.

As a young physician Doyle became an assistant to a doctor in Plymouth, England. However,

he never made much money from medicine. When Doyle married Louise Hawkins in 1885, he had to find a better way to make a living.

To supplement his income, Doyle turned to writing. He had always admired EDGAR ALLAN POE's fictional crime-solving character, C. Auguste Dupin. He also remembered the keen powers of observation of the Edinburgh surgeon Dr. Joseph Bell. Doyle combined qualities of Dupin and Bell to create amateur detective Sherlock Holmes, giving him a razor-sharp mind, a courteous attitude toward women, and few emotions. Holmes first appeared in *A Study in Scarlet*, published in 1887.

It did not bother Doyle that his first detective novel was not immediately popular. Inspired by Sir Walter Scott, a British author of the early 1800s, Doyle decided to write historical stories, instead. He always considered these historical novels, such as *The White Company* (1891) and *Sir Nigel* (1906), to be his masterpieces even though they never appealed to the public.

By 1891 Doyle again needed money. He wrote a series of Sherlock Holmes stories and sold them to *Strand* magazine. This time the fictional detective

caught on. Soon Doyle's writing was bringing in far more money than medicine ever had. He gave up his medical practice that same year.

The popular media quickly began to build their own image of Sherlock Holmes. Illustrator Sidney Paget contributed the well-known deerstalker cap. On the American stage actor William Gillette furnished other details in his portrayal of Holmes. Soon the tall, thin, pipe-smoking detective had a huge audience. Doyle even began to receive mail that had been addressed to Sherlock Holmes at the fictional number 221B Baker Street.

In many ways the Sherlock Holmes character was Doyle's opposite. The author was physically active, patriotic, optimistic, and happy as a family man. (His first wife, with whom he'd had two children, died in 1906. He married Jean Leckie in 1907, and they had three children.) By contrast Holmes was a recluse, a thinker, a man uninterested in politics and emotionally cold.

Holmes may have actually gotten on Doyle's nerves. Certainly the public adoration of the fictional character sometimes annoyed the author. During the Boer War (1899–1902) between

the British and descendants of the Dutch in southern Africa Doyle directed a field hospital. When he was knighted for his service and received the title “Sir,” the press assumed the honor was for his work on the Holmes stories.

At first Doyle tried to escape his creation by demanding more and more money for the Sherlock Holmes stories. To his dismay *Strand* met his demands. Arthur Conan Doyle soon became the highest-paid author of his time.

Later, Doyle decided to kill off Holmes once and for all. In “The Final Problem” (1893) he pitted the detective against a villain named Moriarty. The author plunged both characters over the edge of Reichenbach Falls in Switzerland, a site Doyle had visited. As far as the author was concerned, Sherlock Holmes was dead.

Angry letters poured in from the public, and some people even wore black mourning bands. Alarmed, the editors of *Strand* reassured their readers that the great detective was not really dead. But for ten years Doyle stubbornly resisted writing more Holmes stories. He finally gave in and brought the character back to life.

Arthur Conan Doyle died of a heart problem at his home in Sussex, England, on July 7, 1930.

Works

Doyle wrote fifty-six short stories and four longer tales about Sherlock Holmes. He made good use of his own medical experiences, creating the character of Dr. Watson to serve as narrator for most of the stories.

Like the Edinburgh surgeon Dr. Bell, Holmes often astonished everyone by relating details of a stranger’s life. This typical example is from “The Adventure of the Speckled Band.” Meeting his new client, Holmes “ran her over with one of his quick, all-comprehensive glances.” He then tells her about her morning.

“You have come in by train this morning, I see.”

“You know me, then?”

“No, but I observe the second half of a return ticket in the palm of your left glove.”

Sherlock Holmes used such keen thinking in all his mysteries. He took on many kinds of cases, including ones involving racing horses, deadly snakes, ferocious dogs, and royal scandals. But all of them could be

solved logically, and none of them explore the supernatural. Doyle kept his own interest in spiritualism out of the Holmes tales. Even a mystery that seemed to involve a vampire had a logical explanation in the end.

Doyle also made brilliant use of the first-person narrator. Most of the Holmes stories are told by Dr. John Watson, Holmes's close friend. Watson is a bright man but not as brilliant as Holmes. Consequently, Watson is much easier for most readers to relate to than the detective genius. As we read of Holmes's exploits, we identify with Watson's awe at his friend's mental powers and skills. Not surprisingly, the one story told from Holmes's point of view is not among Doyle's best.

In spite of Holmes's popularity Doyle felt more in common with one of his lesser-known creations. Professor George Edward Challenger is the hero of three science-fiction novels and several short stories. The Challenger tales include both more action and more humor than those about Holmes. And Challenger is often involved in issues closer to Doyle's heart. The author was fascinated by archaeology, and *The Lost World* (1912) is about a land where prehistoric creatures

still live. Challenger returns to London with a pterodactyl—a gigantic flying dinosaur. In another Challenger novel, *The Land of Mist* (1926), the adventurous hero even takes an interest in spiritualism.

Doyle was a prolific author. In addition to his Holmes and Challenger stories and historical novels he wrote other fiction, plays, poetry, and an autobiography, *Memories and Adventures* (1924). He also wrote nonfiction on topics such as spiritualism, the Boer War, and military tactics.

SELECTED WORKS

BY ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE

The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes

The Hound of the Baskervilles

The Professor Challenger stories: *The Lost World*, *The Poison Belt*, *The Land of Mist*, *The Disintegration Machine*, *When the World Screamed*

A Study in Scarlet

SELECTED WORKS

ABOUT ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE

Coren, Michael. *Conan Doyle*. London: Bloomsbury, 1995.

Costello, Peter. *The Real World of Sherlock Holmes: The True Crimes Investigated by Arthur Conan Doyle*. New York: Carroll & Graf, 1994.

Symons, Julian. *Conan Doyle: Portrait of an Artist*. London: Whizzard Press/André Deutsch, 1979.



Sharon Draper

Life

IT'S FAIR to say that Sharon Draper reached the pinnacle of her career as a teacher and writer in the 1990s. Not only did she break into publishing with highly acclaimed novels for young adults and children, but in 1997 she was named U.S. National Teacher of the Year.

Draper was born in Cleveland, Ohio. (She does not reveal her date of birth.) As a child she was drawn to teaching as a career, largely because of the positive influence of her own teachers. Particularly fascinating was Draper's fifth-grade teacher, her first black teacher, who challenged her students to enjoy the work of

“ So what do I do now? My head is throbbin'. My mind is cloudy. My heart is bloody, and my soul is on ice. . . . Nobody's home. Nobody cares. Maybe I'll try to sleep. I wish I could sleep forever. ”

Andy, in TEARS OF A TIGER

difficult writers such as LANGSTON HUGHES and SHAKESPEARE.

After earning a bachelor's degree at Pepperdine University in California (1970) and a master's at Miami University in Ohio (1973), Draper took a job teaching in a junior high school in Cincinnati, Ohio. In 1978 she began teaching English at Cincinnati's Walnut Hills High School, where she blossomed as a topflight professional.

Although Draper always loved to write, she didn't try to publish any of her work until 1991. That year a student challenged her to enter the Gertrude

Williams Johnson Literary Contest sponsored by *Ebony* magazine. Her submission, a short story entitled “One Small Torch,” won the contest—and five thousand dollars. This success spurred her to write novels for young adults. *Tears of a Tiger* (1994) won the 1995 Coretta Scott King Genesis Award and received a Best Book for Young Adults citation from the American Library Association. Ironically, the book had been rejected by twenty-four publishers before it was finally accepted. *Forged by Fire* (1997) incorporates “One Small Torch” and is set in the same high school that is part of *Tears of a Tiger*.

Works

In the classroom Draper tried to help students understand the literary concept of fictional point of view: the way different characters can view the same events from different perspectives. For this reason she liked to pair the Old English classic *Beowulf* with John Gardner’s modern novel *Grendel*; the Gardner novel retells the story from the perspective of the monster in *Beowulf*. This interest in differing points of view is reflected in Draper’s first novel, *Tears of a Tiger*.

The setting of the novel is

the fictional Hazelwood High School. The story begins when Rob Washington, the seventeen-year-old captain of the Hazelwood Tigers basketball team, is killed in a fiery car accident while out with his teammates celebrating a victory. At the center of the novel is Andy Jackson, a teammate who was driving the car. Witnesses say the car was weaving across lanes of traffic before the crash, and there is suspicion that Andy had been drinking. Andy, who already suffers from low self-esteem, blames himself for the crash and the death of his friend. While Rob’s other friends find a way to work through their grief and move on, Andy allows the accident to become the focus of his life.

What sets *Tears of a Tiger* apart from most other novels is its narrative method. Each chapter of the book adopts the point of view of one or more characters, sometimes in standard English, sometimes in the language of modern urban teenagers. The opening chapter, for example, re-creates the basketball team’s locker-room conversation following the game. In later chapters Draper uses letters, homework assignments, poems, telephone conversations, newspaper stories, and other forms of communica-

tion to present the perspectives of students and teachers as they attempt to come to grips with what has happened. Several chapters re-create Andy's conversations with a psychologist, which heighten the drama as Andy comes unraveled. Commenting on the novel, Draper said that she was trying to fill a nearly empty niche in literature for young adults: books that portray black characters, especially adolescent boys. The result is a book that one critic called "gut-wrenching."

With *Forged by Fire* Draper turns to the topic of child abuse. The grim tone of the novel is captured in its opening words, directed at three-year-old Gerald by his mother: "If you don't sit your stinkin', useless butt back down in that shopping cart, I swear I'll bust your greasy face in!" Gerald is fascinated with fire and while left alone one day accidentally sets fire to the apartment where he and his weak, drug-addicted mother live. As a result of the fire Gerald's mother is sentenced to six years in prison for child abandonment. During this time a favorite aunt, Queen, looks after him.

When his mother is released, Gerald returns to her, only to discover that she is now married to a brutal, vile-tempered man named Jordan Sparks. As time

goes on, the only bright spot in Gerald's life is his half sister, Angel, whom Sparks sexually abuses—when he's not physically and emotionally abusing Gerald and his mother. The abuse, combined with Gerald's testimony in court, lands Sparks in jail. Gerald, now eleven, devotes his energies to keeping the family together.

Several years pass. *Forged by Fire* overlaps with *Tears of a Tiger* for Gerald, now seventeen, is a member of the Hazelwood High School basketball team and is affected by the death of Rob Washington and the despair of Andy Jackson. Meanwhile, Angel has become an accomplished dancer. But torment strikes again when Sparks is released from jail and returns to the family convinced that his imprisonment was Gerald's fault.

Draper's success as a writer for young adults resulted from persistence and hard work. As a teacher she was in touch every day with the concerns of teenagers and tried to tap into those concerns in her writing.

WORKS BY
SHARON DRAPER

Forged by Fire
Tears of a Tiger



“ Last night I dreamt I went to Manderley again. ”

The unnamed narrator in REBECCA

Daphne du Maurier {1907–89}

Life

DAPHNE DU Maurier was born in London, England, on May 13, 1907, into an illustrious family of actors, authors, and artists. Her grandfather George du Maurier made caricatures, or exaggerated drawings, and wrote novels. Her uncle was also a writer, and her father was Gerald du Maurier, one of the most famous stage actors of his time. Du Maurier herself was given the opportunity to become an actress but declined, preferring to write. At age four she said that she had written a book called *John, in the Wood of the World*. The book was nonexistent, of course,

but the incident shows that du Maurier was thinking of herself as a writer at a very early age. Du Maurier was educated privately and sent to finishing school in Paris.

Like several of her spirited heroines, young du Maurier wished she had been born a boy, recognizing that as a boy she would have had greater freedom. She found a measure of this longed-for freedom in the countryside. Despite having been brought up in cities such as London and Paris, she felt most at home in Cornwall, a coastal county in the southwest of

England. She loved the rugged landscape and found she could write there much more easily than at her family's home in Hampstead, near London, where she had very little solitude. In Cornwall on breaks from writing she learned to sail, took long walks, and explored the area, discovering the estate named Menabilly, which would later be central to her most famous novel, *Rebecca* (1938). Menabilly was empty at the time, and she would sometimes walk up and look at the house and grounds.

On her rambles she also saw the long-abandoned shipwreck of the *Jane Slade*. Du Maurier was interested in the wreck's history, learning about it from a descendant of the original Jane Slade, after whom the ship had been named. She shaped these details into her first novel, *The Loving Spirit* (1931), the fictional story of four generations of a Cornish shipbuilding family. She wrote the novel in ten weeks, and it was accepted by a publisher two months later. She was just twenty-three years old.

Frederick Browning, a major in an elite regiment of the British army, read *The Loving Spirit* and was so impressed that he took his boat out past du Maurier's house, hoping to meet

the young author. They did not meet then but did shortly after and were married within a few months. Because of Browning's career they spent a number of years living in various places around the world. Although du Maurier remained married to Browning until his death in 1965, their marriage was at times problem filled and strained. Still, they had three children, and du Maurier continued to write. Many of her books were best-sellers, and her fame grew. She was named a Dame Commander of the Order of the British Empire in 1969.

In 1943, five years after immortalizing Menabilly in *Rebecca*, she and her family were able to move into that estate, where they lived for over twenty years. Even after she left Menabilly, du Maurier continued to live in Cornwall until she died in her sleep on April 19, 1989.

Works

While readers have long loved du Maurier, critics have had mixed feelings about her work. She herself was frustrated by the label "romance novelist," which she was never able to discard

despite the wide range of subjects she tackled. Many reviewers have praised du Maurier's storytelling ability and her skill at evoking the atmosphere of a story's setting. But some have argued that her works can be melodramatic, her characters inconsistent, and her prose flat.

More recently, feminist critics have suggested there are darker meanings beneath the surface of her "romances." Some of these critics argue that du Maurier explores such large-scale, universal problems as the nature of good and evil, the capacity within good people to commit evil, and the impossibility of escaping guilt after doing so. For example, her fourth novel, *Jamaica Inn* (1936) can be seen on one level as a rather sinister, dark romance. However, some readers find the love affair between Jem and Mary less interesting than du Maurier's exploration of the sins of other characters. Mary's Aunt Patience has nearly lost her mind because of her inability to stop her husband, Joss, from committing murder after murder. And the one person who seems to offer refuge to Mary turns out to be the most evil character in the whole book, cloaking his true nature in the

disguise of a clergyman. Finally, the ending is ambiguous. Does *Jamaica Inn* offer a romantic ending in its portrayal of Jem and Mary, or does it comment on the low status of women?

Du Maurier also explores romance and guilt in her fifth and most famous novel, *Rebecca*. In this novel the unnamed narrator is an unsophisticated young woman who marries Maxim de Winter, a brooding widower. After a brief European honeymoon they go to England to live on the de Winter family estate, Manderley. Here, the narrator is convinced that Maxim is still pining for his first wife, Rebecca, whose presence seems to be everywhere. Everything the narrator hears about Rebecca only makes her feel even more inept. Rebecca, it seems, was perfect—brilliant, witty, and beautiful. However, there is a mystery surrounding her tragic death—a mystery that finally becomes all too clear to the narrator.

Recently, critics have pointed out that in *Rebecca* du Maurier may have been making a subtle (perhaps even unconscious) comment on the restrictions placed on women. Rebecca dies, in part, because she refuses to conform to

conventional expectations of female behavior. And although the shadowy narrator seems to win in the end, it is at great expense; she has no identity except as wife. Like *Jamaica Inn*, *Rebecca* is an ambiguous novel that may only be masquerading as a romance.

Du Maurier wrote for many years, turning out novels, short stories, plays, biographies, histories of her family, and two books about Cornwall. Several of her novels and short stories were turned into movies, most notably *Rebecca* and *The Birds*, both directed by Alfred Hitchcock.



SELECTED WORKS

BY DAPHNE DU MAURIER

The Apple Tree: A Short Novel and Some Stories (published also as *Kiss Me Again, Stranger: A Collection of Eight Stories, Long and Short and The Birds, and Other Stories*)

Frenchman's Creek

Gerald: A Portrait

The Glass-Blowers

Jamaica Inn

The Loving Spirit

My Cousin Rachel

*Myself When Young:
The Shaping of a Writer*

Rebecca

Rule Britannia

SELECTED WORKS

ABOUT DAPHNE DU MAURIER

Forster, Margaret. *Daphne du Maurier: The Secret Life of the Renowned Storyteller*. New York: Doubleday, 1993.

Kelly, Richard Michael. *Daphne du Maurier*. Boston: Twayne, 1987.

Shallcross, Martyn. *The Private World of Daphne du Maurier*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992.



“ Our teenage daughter Kaitlyn was chased down and shot to death while driving home from a girlfriend’s house on a peaceful Sunday evening.

Police dubbed the shooting ‘random.’

... But to our family the circumstances didn’t add up to ‘random,’ especially after we made the shocking discovery that Kait had been keeping some very dangerous secrets from us. ”

from *WHO KILLED MY DAUGHTER?*

Lois Duncan {1934–}

Life

THE QUOTATION above is not from the fiction written by Lois Duncan. Duncan’s daughter, Kait, really was killed, and the mother—the writer of many mystery stories—had a real-life mystery of her own to solve.

Lois Duncan Steinmetz was born on April 28, 1934, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Her parents, Joseph and Lois, were both well-known magazine photographers. Growing up in Florida, Duncan knew from a very early age that she wanted to be a writer. In fact, in her autobiographical work, *Chapters: My Growth as a Writer* (1982),

Duncan says, “When I was three years old I was dictating stories to my parents, and as soon as I learned to print, I was writing them down myself.”

Duncan was sixteen when she published her first story in a national magazine. Since she was named after her mother, she decided to use only her first and middle names as her pen name.

After high school Duncan enrolled at Duke University in Durham, North Carolina, but was unhappy there, partially because of a disability. She describes it herself in *Chapters*:

I have almost no visual memory. I cannot remember what things and people look like. If I meet someone new and analyze his looks, telling myself, "He has red hair and freckles and a hook nose," I will remember the description, but I won't be able to bring to mind a picture of the face. If two people fit the same description, I'm lost. I can't tell them apart.

This disability made life at a large university very difficult.

Duncan was also discouraged about the reaction to college essays she wrote; she thought them quite clever, but her English teachers didn't agree. In one she used the popular *Ladies' Home Journal* "Can This Marriage Be Saved?" format to write a paper on the relationship between SHAKESPEARE'S Othello and Desdemona. Because Duncan's English teachers didn't like her attempts at humor, Duncan became discouraged. Eventually, she found she could no longer write stories.

Duncan left Duke after her freshman year and was married that summer. She began to write stories again, and her first novel, *Debutante Hill* (1958), won the Seventeenth Summer Literary Award from the publisher Dodd, Mead.

After eight years of marriage Duncan divorced her husband and moved to Albuquerque, New

Mexico, to be near her brother Bill. By this time she had three children to support and did so primarily through her writing.

In 1965 Duncan married Don Arquette. She had two more children and began to write the mystery and suspense novels on which her current reputation is based.

She won numerous awards for her works, including in 1991 the Margaret A. Edwards Award for lifetime achievement as a writer.

Works

Though Duncan had written novels dealing with out-of-body experiences (*Stranger with My Face*, 1981) and extrasensory perception (*The Third Eye*, 1984), she claimed not to have believed in such phenomena when she wrote about them. She later came to believe.

When her daughter Kait was killed in a drive-by shooting, Duncan was horrified to find uncanny similarities between this all-too-real situation and one she had created in a novel published only a month before. In her nonfiction account of Kait's death, *Who Killed My Daughter?* (1992), Duncan said she came to believe that

Kait was murdered by a man nicknamed Vamp who was driving a Camaro. In Duncan's novel *Don't Look Behind You* (1989) the main character, April, was almost killed by a man named Mike Vamp—who drove a Camaro. Duncan also reported thinking that a sketch of the real Vamp looks very much like the drawing of the fictional Vamp on the cover of the British edition of her novel.

Duncan then came to believe that she had actually foreseen events she thought she created. Her first suspense novel, *Ransom* (1966), had also “come true.” At the time Duncan thought the similarity to the real crime was coincidental. “I wrote the story when I lived in Livermore, California. Soon after the book was published, a school bus driver [in Livermore] kidnapped a busload of students and held them for ransom. The crime was so similar to my book that the parents of one of the children wanted to have me arrested.” After Kait's death Duncan began to doubt that the similarities between her novels and real events were accidental.

Duncan's novels portray normal teenagers who suddenly find themselves in strange, often supernatural situations. The term “page turner” certainly describes

Duncan's work; her clear simple style never gets in the way of the story. Duncan stopped writing young adult suspense novels after her daughter's death and did not publish one for eight years until 1997, when *Gallows Hill* came out. Because of death threats Duncan and her husband received, they left Albuquerque and moved to North Carolina.

SELECTED WORKS BY LOIS DUNCAN

Daughters of Eve
Don't Look Behind You
Down a Dark Hall
Gallows Hill
Killing Mr. Griffin
Locked in Time
Ransom
Stranger with My Face
Summer of Fear
The Third Eye
The Twisted Window

SELECTED WORKS ABOUT LOIS DUNCAN

Kies, Cosette. *Presenting Lois Duncan*.
New York: Twayne, 1994.
A Visit with Lois Duncan (videotape).
RDA Enterprises, 1985.

WEB SITES

<<http://www.bdd.com/teacher/dunc.html>>
<<http://www.iag.net/~barq/kait.html>>
<<http://www.iag.net/~barq/lois.html>>



“ Rich Oliver, with his whiplike right arm, put the Buccaneers down in order in the first three innings, striking out four. Then he yielded a double with one out in the fourth inning. But that threat evaporated when Hal leaped desperately to his right to catch a line drive and then, while falling, pitched underhand to Freddie Harrison at second base to catch the runner trying to return. ”

from INFIELD HIT

Thomas Dygard {1931–96}

Life

ALL OF Thomas Dygard's books for young adults are about sports. So it should come as no surprise to learn that Dygard worked for many years as a sportswriter before turning to fiction writing. Dygard was born in Little Rock, Arkansas, on August 10, 1931. His father, Thomas, was a tailor who died when his son was ten. His mother, Nannie, was a musician who supported the family after her husband's death by teaching and playing piano.

Dygard said he had a normal childhood, but at the age of twelve he was already editing a neighborhood newspaper. While

in high school Dygard played sports and worked on the school paper. His work on the paper led to an apprenticeship as a sportswriter with the *Arkansas Gazette*. The apprenticeship led to a regular job, and during his first few years as a reporter Dygard covered almost every sport imaginable. While continuing to work, he enrolled at Little Rock Junior College. During his freshman year his mother died of cancer. In 1951 he married another student from Little Rock Junior College.

Dygard finished his degree at the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville, two hundred miles

from Little Rock. Even so, he continued to work for the *Gazette* until about six months after his graduation. At that point he began a master's degree in history and took a job with the University of Arkansas. Six months later the Associated Press (AP), a news service that provides stories to papers across the country, asked him to cover sports. The offer was too good to decline.

DyCARD continued to work at the AP until 1993, when he retired and moved to Evansville, Indiana. He died of heart failure on September 30, 1996.

Works

Almost every review of a DyCARD sports novel contains the phrase "play-by-play action." Like a good sportswriter, DyCARD provides the reader with vivid descriptions of game highlights—whether the game be baseball, football, basketball, or soccer.

Infield Hit (1995) is typical of many of DyCARD's novels. Hal Stevens's parents are divorced, and Hal and his mother have moved several times, forcing the boy to adapt to new schools again and again. This time, though, his mother promises him they'll stay until he finishes

high school. So Hal begins his junior year hoping that he can make friends as he has before—on the baseball diamond.

In the past Hal has always been known as "the son of the famous Ralph Stevens," legendary third baseman for the St. Louis Cardinals. Upon entering Cannon City High, though, Hal has resolved to keep quiet about who his father is. He's tired of being compared with his father—especially since most of the comparisons are negative. "It was embarrassing when . . . [a] reporter wrote that Hal had neither his father's strong throwing arm at third base nor his father's sure control of a big bat at the plate." Hal also worries that the new coach of the Cannon High Gunners, a former professional shortstop and friend of his father's, may single him out for special treatment and make it all the more difficult for Hal to find friends.

Coaches in the world of Thomas DyCARD are rather godlike creatures. They have tremendous confidence, wisdom, and strict professional and moral standards; they tend to be strong, silent types. Don Mavis in *Infield Hit* is no exception. He watches Hal intently during initial practices and then moves

Hal from third base to second. He also encourages Hal to use a lighter bat and change his style of hitting. When Hal follows the coach's sage advice, something wonderful happens. "Today, during the fierce competition of a real game, he saw—clearly, for the first time—that the shadow of his father was gone. He was Hal Stevens, a second baseman, whereas his father had been a third baseman. He was now a place hitter and a bunter whereas his father had been a slugger."

Everything is going well for Hal until his father shows up to watch him practice. When his fellow players find out who his father is, the son is seen as "coach's pet," and Hal believes he is responsible for the Gunners' best hitter walking out on the team. He must deal with these issues in order to fit in fully at his new school.

Winning Kicker (1978) stars another wise coach, the nearly legendary John Earlingham. Earlingham has coached the Higgins High football team for thirty-six years—ever since the beginning of World War II. "In 1941, when the football coach at Higgins High enlisted in the Marines, the school-board members did not have much of a choice. So they gave the job,

on a temporary basis, to John Earlingham. He was an algebra teacher, exempt from the draft because of the polio."

The novel begins in Coach Earlingham's final year as coach, and he confronts a problem he has never had to face before: a girl who wants to try out as placekicker for the Hornets. Earlingham, naturally, handles the situation with wisdom and equity. Along the way the reader learns a lot about the attitudes and philosophy that make Earlingham great.

Dygart's style is pure sportswriter—swift action, good descriptions of activity, and active verbs with punch. His novels follow a familiar formula, so his readers always know what to expect.

SELECTED WORKS
BY THOMAS DYCARD

Backfield Package

Forward Pass

Game Plan

Infield Hit

Quarterback Walk-On

River Danger

Running Scared

Soccer Duel

Tournament Upstart

Winning Kicker



“ I am an Invisible man. No, I am not a spook like those who haunted Edgar Allan Poe; nor am I one of your Hollywood-movie ectoplasms. I am a man of substance, of flesh and bone, fiber and liquids—and I might even be said to possess a mind. I am invisible, understand, simply because people refuse to see me. ”

The narrator of INVISIBLE MAN

Ralph Ellison {1914–94}

Life

THE AFRICAN-AMERICAN author Ralph Ellison struggled against invisibility in a white culture. He was undoubtedly victorious, for he is universally recognized as a great writer, and his novel *Invisible Man* (1952) has been acclaimed as a masterpiece of twentieth-century American fiction.

Ellison was groomed for the role of a great American writer from the day of his birth, March 1, 1914, in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. His father, an ice and coal vendor, named him Ralph Waldo after the nineteenth-century American

essayist and poet Ralph Waldo Emerson. He did so in hopes that his son would someday be a great writer.

Ellison's father never saw his dream realized. He died when Ellison was only three years old. Ellison's mother worked as a maid but found time for political activism and campaigned for the Socialist party. She was arrested on several occasions for defying segregation laws. Ellison credited his mother with inspiring his own activism and dedicated *Invisible Man* to her.

At an early age Ellison fell in love with jazz and learned

how to play the trumpet. As a youth he became friends with Jimmy Rushing and Hot Lips Page, both of whom became famous jazz musicians.

In 1933 Ellison was accepted with a scholarship at Alabama's Tuskegee Institute, founded for the higher education of African Americans. So he hopped a freight train to Alabama and began his college education. At Tuskegee he studied classical music composition and became interested in sculpture.

After reading T. S. Eliot's 1922 poem *The Waste Land*, Ellison also became interested in literature. Eliot's long poem had a tremendous effect on him. He began to consider the possibility of writing literature of similar power out of the African-American experience.

He left Tuskegee after three years and went to New York City. There he met the African-American poet LANGSTON HUGHES, who personally introduced him to the black novelist RICHARD WRIGHT. In Wright, Ellison found a true kindred spirit.

Wright encouraged Ellison to read many important authors of the past, including Joseph Conrad, Fyodor Dostoyevsky, and Henry James. Before long,

Ellison had become a dedicated writer and began publishing short stories, including his now-classic "Flying Home" (1943).

During World War II Ellison joined the United States merchant marines and served as a ship's cook. He returned to America when the war ended. Soon afterward he married Fanny McConnell, who would remain his wife until he died.

He also resumed his writing. It took Ellison seven years to write *Invisible Man*. It was published to great critical acclaim in 1952, became a best-seller, and won the National Book Award in 1953. Almost overnight Ellison became recognized as one of America's most important authors.

Ellison went on to publish two books of essays, *Shadow and Act* (1964) and *Going to the Territory* (1986). He had a distinguished career as a teacher, lecturing in universities all over the world on subjects ranging from African-American culture to Russian literature.

He also worked for many years on a second novel, excerpts of which were published in various magazines. He died of pancreatic cancer on April 16, 1994, his vast and reportedly brilliant

manuscript still unfinished, untitled, and unpublished.

Works

The protagonist of Ellison's short story "Flying Home" is Todd, an African-American military pilot during the 1940s. In the time of the story black pilots are new to the American military. Todd feels an overpowering need to succeed, not just for himself but for all his race.

Todd accidentally crashes his plane in rural Alabama. With his plane wrecked and his ankle broken he fears the ridicule of white officers upon his return to the air base. He also fears the violence of local whites who often lynch blacks for seeking to advance themselves. But perhaps most of all he fears what he believes to be the mocking attitude of the uneducated black farmer who tends his wounds.

"Flying Home" is a typical Ellison work in a many ways. Like the title character of *Invisible Man*, Todd struggles with a desperate sense of aloneness—among both whites and African Americans. The story also exhibits qualities and techniques that mark Ellison's other fiction.

Like the works of Ellison's literary heroes, including Henry James, Joseph Conrad, and William Faulkner, "Flying Home" contains vivid descriptions and characterizations. It also shows the influence of HERMAN MELVILLE (as does *Invisible Man*) in its dreamlike use of symbolism. Todd is, in a sense, a fallen angel, cast from the heaven of his hopes and ambitions into the hell of rural Alabama.

At the same time, the story has distinctly African-American qualities. The voices of the black characters are authentic in rhythm and dialect, and the descriptions of African-American life have a gritty authenticity.

The story is also flavored with black folklore. The old black man who cares for Todd tells him a story. At first Todd recognizes it as a familiar folktale. But as storytellers will, the old man improvises and changes the story to reflect Todd's situation. In it the man claims to have once died and gone to heaven. There he was fitted with a handsome pair of wings, but as a black angel he was expected to wear a harness and not fly freely. The old black man was cast out of heaven for disobedience and parachuted to Alabama.

Ellison's reliance on the traditional African-American storytelling is typical of his work. His prose sometimes also takes on the rhythms of jazz.

One day after Ellison returned from World War II, he typed this sentence: "I am an invisible man." He immediately knew that it was the first sentence of a novel. When he completed the novel, it told the story of an unnamed young black idealist—the invisible man of the title—who grows up in the segregated South. Like Ellison himself, he attends a black college before moving to New York, where he becomes a civil-rights activist. But by the end of the novel he finds himself utterly alone in both white and black America. He is truly an invisible man.

Although Ellison's greatness as a literary craftsman is almost impossible to deny, his work has not pleased everyone. Political leftists and black militants have harshly criticized his work. Leftists sometimes condemn the lack of political commitment in Ellison's writings (despite Ellison's lifelong liberal activism). Black militants sometimes criticize his reverence for white European and American literature.

Ellison always brushed aside such criticism. "My approach is that I'm an American writer," he said in a 1982 *New York Times* interview. "I write out of the larger literary tradition—which, by the way, is part Negro—from TWAIN to Melville to Faulkner."

Ellison always defended his individuality as an artist. For this reason his works appeal to readers of all races. The narrator of *Invisible Man* expresses this universality in the last sentence of the book: "Who knows but that, on the lower frequencies, I speak for you?"

WORKS BY
RALPH ELLISON

Flying Home and Other Stories
Going to the Territory
Invisible Man
Shadow and Act

SELECTED WORKS
ABOUT RALPH ELLISON

Bentson, Kimberly W., ed. *Speaking for You: The Vision of Ralph Ellison*. Washington: Howard University Press, 1987.
Busby, Mark. *Ralph Ellison*. Boston: Twayne, 1991.
Graham, Maryemma and Amritjit Singh, eds. *Conversations with Ralph Ellison*. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1995.



“ He considered a moment and then thought, I wish for courage. Because with courage, you weren’t afraid to look at the truth. ”

Tendai, in *THE EAR, THE EYE AND THE ARM*

Nancy Farmer {1941–}

Life

IT WAS probably inevitable that Nancy Farmer would become a storyteller. For most of her life she was drawn either to people who told vivid stories or to colorful characters who would later provide the inspiration for her own stories.

Born July 9, 1941, in Phoenix, Arizona, Farmer spent most of her childhood living in a hotel near the Mexican border. This unusual lifestyle meant that she grew up surrounded by an ever-changing array of transients and people whose jobs kept them on the move. Truck drivers, cowboys, and other itinerant workers passing

through fascinated her with tales of their adventures and of the unusual people they had met.

After receiving her bachelor’s degree from Reed College in Portland, Oregon, in 1963, Farmer set off on her own adventures, first to India with the Peace Corps, then to the University of California at Berkeley during the politically charged years of the late 1960s and early 1970s. During her college years Farmer displayed little interest in writing, pursuing instead a career in science. But her instinct for adventure resurfaced after three years as a lab technician at Berkeley,

when she hopped a freighter bound for Africa.

Farmer lived for seventeen years in several African nations, including Mozambique and Zimbabwe, and while she still worked as a scientist, she was always listening to other people's stories. In Zimbabwe Farmer met and married her husband, a literature teacher. While this marriage may have helped spark her interest in writing, her writing career began as a sudden inspiration; she was reading a novel by Margaret Forster to her four-year-old and thought, "I could do that." And she did, emerging three hours later with a complete story. Farmer believes she was visited by a *shave* (shah•vay). According to the folklore of the Shona (a Bantu people in south-east Africa), a *shave* is a wandering spirit of the improperly buried dead. *Shaves* teach the living a new skill—in Farmer's case, storytelling.

Farmer's experiences in Africa played a major role in her novels, most of which take Africa for their setting. And all those years of listening to stories gave her a gift for telling fanciful, adventurous tales. Her first book, *Lorelei*, was published in Zimbabwe in 1988. Her next novel, *The Ear, the Eye and the Arm*

(1989), though only her second, was named a Newbery Honor Book in 1995.

Nancy Farmer returned to California in 1989 and later devoted herself to writing full time.

Works

Farmer's stories have in common a strong sense of a place the author obviously loved. She describes in vivid detail her characters' surroundings, the food they eat, and the plants, animals, even insects that make up the world of her stories. She introduces her readers to the languages and the folklore of Africa, putting a lively face on a place about which many of her readers probably know very little.

The Ear, the Eye and the Arm is set in Harare, Zimbabwe, in the year 2194. The story, based on an African mythological tale, centers around the three children of General Matsika, the country's chief of security, who live behind the walls of a heavily guarded estate. The children—Tendai, Rita, and Kuda—are kidnapped by the She Elephant with the help of Fist and Knife. The She Elephant forces the children to work in a plastic mine in a toxic

waste dump and plans to sell the three to a street gang called the Masks. Their parents hire a trio of mutant detectives—the Ear, the Eye, and the Arm—to recover the children. They lead the reader on an odyssey through various locales as they keep coming within a hairbreadth of succeeding. Along the way the children encounter an assortment of bizarre creatures with mystical powers, and Tendai learns the true meaning of courage.

Do You Know Me (1996) is the story of nine-year-old Tapiwa and her Uncle Zeka. Tapiwa, whose father is a bank teller, struggles with the snobbishness of her private-school classmates. Uncle Zeka comes to stay with Tapiwa's family, giving them cause for concern over his many foolish schemes, which always seem to put Tapiwa in embarrassing situations. Farmer uses the character of Uncle Zeka to share some of the many stories she learned during her stay in Africa, for Uncle Zeka entertains the family with tales of his adventures and misadventures while he walked from the African country of Mozambique to Zimbabwe.

In *A Girl Named Disaster* (1996), a longer and more detailed book than her earlier

ones, Farmer focuses on the African belief in the spirit world. Nhamo, an eleven-year-old girl, has been promised in marriage to a vicious man with three wives. At her grandmother's urging she leaves her village before the marriage can take place. Nhamo sets off in a canoe down the Musengezi River, headed for Zimbabwe. River currents take her instead to Lake Cabora Bassa, uncharted territory in Mozambique. There Nhamo battles drowning, starvation, and loneliness. Her struggles bring her close to the spirit world, and talks with her dead mother and other ancestors teach her how to survive.

As one *Publishers Weekly* critic has summarized Nancy Farmer's work, "Farmer . . . is clearly a born storyteller. . . . [S]he displays an astute ear for dialogue, a deft hand with plot twists, and a keen, dry wit."

SELECTED WORKS
BY NANCY FARMER

Do You Know Me

The Ear, the Eye and the Arm

A Girl Named Disaster

Lorelei

Tapiwa's Uncle

The Warm Place



“ Selina was up daily at four. . . . The house to clean, the chickens to tend, sewing, washing, ironing, cooking. . . . [S]he saw clearly how the little farm was mismanaged through lack of foresight, imagination, and—she faced it squarely—through stupidity. She was fond of this great, kindly, blundering, stubborn boy who was her husband. But she saw him with amazing clearness through the mists of her love. ”

from *SO BIG*

Edna Ferber {1887–1968}

Life

EDNA FERBER was born in Kalamazoo, Michigan, on August 15, 1887. She dealt with two major subjects in her writing, the strength of American women and America itself. As with Selina Peake DeJong, the heroine of *So Big* (1924), women in Ferber’s fictional world outshine their husbands and children. They are smart, they are physically and emotionally strong, and they endure.

Much the same may be said of Ferber herself, who lived a long, exciting, and unconventional life.

Ferber’s parents were Jacob Charles Ferber, a Hungarian

immigrant, and Julia Neumann, the daughter of a German family who had settled in Chicago, Illinois. Ferber says in her autobiography, *A Peculiar Treasure* (1939), that her mother “was very much in love with someone . . . [other than my father], not a Jew. But parental pressure and conservative middle-class upbringing proved too strong.” Ferber says her mother went along with the engagement to Jacob thinking that “something or other” would happen to stop the wedding. “But nothing did. And to her helpless amazement she found herself . . . being married to

the wrong man.” The story of Ferber’s parents’ marriage is repeated many times in her fiction. Strong women marry men who are not their match in intelligence or endurance.

After their marriage the Ferbers moved to Kalamazoo, where Jacob opened a store. Jacob’s store didn’t do well, so the young family moved several times over the next few years, eventually settling in Appleton, Wisconsin. As a Jewish family in small midwestern towns the Ferbers were often the victims of insults and discrimination.

On graduation from high school Ferber resolved to study acting, but her parents opposed the idea. After a heated argument about her ambitions Edna stormed out of the house. She went to the offices of the local newspaper and asked for a job as a writer. Remarkably, she was hired on the spot—at a salary of three dollars a week. Ferber was the first woman reporter in Appleton. She later moved to Milwaukee to work for the *Milwaukee Journal*.

An illness in 1911 sent Edna home to Appleton to recuperate. Bored, she began to write fiction. The result was her first novel, *Dawn O’Hara*.

Almost from the moment she started writing until after

World War II Ferber was one of the most popular, best-selling writers in the United States. She won the Pulitzer Prize, one of the most prestigious honors for writing, in 1925 for *So Big*, and her novel *Show Boat* (1926) was made into a musical that is still performed today.

Eventually Ferber settled in New York City, where she began a series of collaborations with the famous playwright George F. Kaufman. Among the plays they wrote together are *Royal Family* (1928), *Dinner at Eight* (1931), and *Stage Door* (1936). Though she never acted, she fulfilled her youthful dream by being deeply involved in the theater.

Ferber died of cancer on April 17, 1968, at the age of eighty.

Works

Ferber’s training as a reporter served her well as a writer of fiction. For each of her novels she would travel to a particular part of the country and steep herself in its history, speech, values, and culture. She wrote about Oklahoma, Texas, Alaska, the Illinois prairie, and New Orleans and other cities along the Mississippi.

Show Boat is probably the

best known of Ferber's novels. It is the story of a paddle-wheel boat, one of many that sailed along the Mississippi bringing entertainment to river towns. The story follows three generations of the Hawks family, Parthy and Andy Hawks, owners of the showboat; their daughter, Magnolia; and her daughter, Kim.

In nearly all her novels Ferber shows sympathy for ethnic groups that suffer discrimination. In *Show Boat* a subplot deals with racist attitudes toward African Americans. *Giant* (1958), set in Texas, treats discrimination against Hispanics.

Many critics consider *So Big* Ferber's best work. Selina Peake DeJong is the daughter of gambler Simon Peake. Her mother died when she was very young, and she and her father travel around the country, living well if Simon wins, less well if he loses. Selina does not completely understand what her father does until he is carried up to their room in a Chicago boarding-house, dead of a gunshot wound. Her father's legacy consists of two diamonds and \$479 in cash. Faced with living with two old aunts or striking out on her own, nineteen-year-old Selina decides to become a teacher. She accepts a position at a Dutch school at

High Prairie, outside of Chicago. There she meets and marries Pervus DeJong, and together they buy a small farm and start a family.

When their son, Dirk, is eight years old, Pervus dies, and Selina is left to run the farm herself. The Monday after her husband's death she shocks everyone by deciding that she and Dirk will drive the produce to the market in Chicago, an unheard-of venture for a woman.

Ferber liked short titles and long books. While her prose is simple and clear, some readers find it heavy on the adjectives. Her optimism and sentimentality clearly belong to an earlier, more naive generation.

SELECTED WORKS BY EDNA FERBER

Cimarron

Giant

Show Boat

So Big

SELECTED WORK ABOUT EDNA FERBER

Gilbert, Julie Goldsmith. *Ferber: A Biography of Edna Ferber and Her Circle*. New York: Doubleday, 1978.

WEB SITE

<<http://www.apl.org/pages/ferber>>



“ Always before, he'd had the rhythm and rush of the sea in his ears—if not loud enough to actually hear, at least close enough to feel its pull. Now it was barely possible for him to believe there was such a thing as an ocean. He stood in a sea of sand, a foreign inhospitable place, where water of any sort was a secret, where silence seemed to grow in time, where even the stars were unfamiliar. ”

from *ACROSS THE GRAIN*

Jean Ferris {1939–}

Life

SETTING HAS tremendous importance in the works of Jean Ferris. In *Across the Grain* (1990), as in many of Ferris's other novels, a troubled adolescent travels to a new and very different place and is substantially changed by the experience. Similarly, Ferris, born on January 24, 1939, in Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, must have felt the influence of a powerfully different landscape when she moved to Palo Alto, California, to attend college at Stanford University.

Ferris's father, Jack Schwartz, was a major general in the military. Her mother, Jessie, worked at home. Ferris received her

bachelor's degree from Stanford in 1961 and her master's degree in 1962. She was married to attorney Alfred Ferris in 1962, and together they raised two children.

After college Ferris got a job at the Veterans Administration hospital in San Francisco, California, as a clinical audiologist—someone who works with hearing-impaired individuals. She also worked as a clinical audiologist in San Diego, California.

Her first novel, *Amen, Moses Gardenia* (1983), was written after a couple of her daughter's friends attempted suicide. Ferris said her goal was to give hope to

young people who are sad and scared enough to consider ending their lives.

Ferris was awarded a number of grants and awards for her work. For example, she received grants from the Society of Children's Book Writers in 1984 and in 1987. *Invincible Summer* was chosen as a Best Book in 1987 by both the American Library Association and *School Library Journal*.

Works

Ferris said that she loved to travel, an interest that is reflected in many of her novels. Ferris's teenage heroes are frequently transported away from their homes and, figuratively, back in time in order to learn about themselves and their families. In *Signs of Life* (1995) Hannah Flood and her parents travel to France to visit the caves of Lascaux and study the ancient paintings in them. The family has been torn apart by the death of Hannah's twin sister, Molly, and Hannah and her parents have taken a trip together in the hope of healing some of the wounds they suffer. While in France Hannah begins to experience strange dreams that seem to suggest a link between her spirit and the spirit

of the place. She even dreams that she was one of the prehistoric painters who decorated the caves with religious symbols.

In *All That Glitters* (1996) sixteen-year-old Brian has to spend six weeks with a father he hardly knows in a tiny town called Fortunata in the Florida Keys. Fortunata, says Brian, "isn't much: one main street of three or four blocks; a scatter of cottages and trailer homes on crushed limestone lanes, and, behind the main street, the water." Here Brian learns to scuba dive and to take underwater photographs as part of an archaeological expedition to discover a sunken Spanish galleon that disappeared in 1604. On this tiny island surrounded by immense ocean Brian also learns a lot about himself and his father.

In *Across the Grain* Will Griffith follows his irresponsible sister, Paige, from his beloved home on the Pacific Ocean to a small desert community. There he meets Sam Webb, who has come to the desert to heal old wounds. Sam tells Will, "There's a home landscape locked in every soul—the place you think of when you think of home." Will, who responds that the ocean is his home landscape, eventually comes to feel a real sense of identity with the desert landscape.

Part of his transformation occurs when he helps his new friend, an unconventional girl named Mike, film her mother's archaeological dig and discovers that the desert was once an ocean.

In addition to focusing intently on setting, Ferris's books also deal extensively with parents who are absent or emotionally distant. In both *All That Glitters* and *Across the Grain* young boys bond emotionally with older men who are masculine role models. These men answer questions, give advice, and provide the unconditional love the boys have needed in order to find their way in the world. For example, in *Across the Grain* Sam Webb teaches Will to carve. The boy practices on beeswax until he's ready to try his hand at wood. Then Sam hands Will a block of linden and tells him that he must carve along the grain of the wood. "You're asking for trouble if you try and go across your grain. Besides the fact that it's harder work, you get cracks and splits and a general mess. Anyway, wood's ten times stronger along the grain than across it." This is a good description of what the male role models do for the boys in Ferris's novels: The men help the boys find their grain and their strength.

Ferris also deals with com-

munication problems between men and women and mothers and daughters. Particularly poignant is the relationship in *Signs of Life* between Hannah and her mother after the death of Hannah's twin, Molly. Molly had been more like her mother, and Hannah feels the gap between herself and her mother widen dangerously as they both try to cope with their grief. She desperately wants her mother to love her for her differences from her sister—not in spite of them.

While Ferris's novels are generally serious in their treatment of theme, the author always adds humorous situations and witty dialogue to lighten the tone.

SELECTED WORKS

BY JEAN FERRIS

Across the Grain

All That Glitters

Amen, Moses Gardenia

Invincible Summer

Relative Strangers

Signs of Life

The Stainless Steel Rule



“ They were careless people . . . they smashed up things and creatures and then retreated back into their money or their vast carelessness . . . and let other people clean up the mess they had made. ”

Nick Carraway, in
THE GREAT GATSBY

F. Scott Fitzgerald {1896–1940}

Life

“MY IDEA is always to reach my generation,” F. Scott Fitzgerald once wrote. Most readers agree that as the American writer who most convincingly portrayed the “lost generation” of the 1920s Jazz Age, Fitzgerald succeeded in capturing his “idea.”

Francis Scott Key Fitzgerald was born in St. Paul, Minnesota, on September 24, 1896. His early background shaped much of his later fiction. His father came from a socially prominent family with little wealth; his mother was a woman of wealth but no social standing. As a result, the Fitzgeralds lived on

the edges of high society, always looking in on the privileged classes—a pattern that runs through the author’s work.

Even as a child Fitzgerald wanted to be a writer. He scribbled on the backs of schoolbooks and in the margins of homework assignments. He published a short story in a school magazine and always kept a journal. Later, in boarding school he also wrote plays, several of which were performed onstage. When the time came for him to attend college, he delighted his parents by choosing Princeton University

in New Jersey. However, his academic record was poor, and he never graduated. Instead, when the United States entered World War I in 1917, he joined the army, looking for adventure. At this time he also asked Zelda Sayre, the daughter of a prominent Alabama family, to marry him.

Fitzgerald was somewhat of a failure during this period of his life. He never saw active military duty, Zelda turned down his proposal because he lacked financial success, and his efforts to make a living as a writer after the war were greeted with rejection slips from publishers—122 of them, he said, pinned to his wall. His luck changed when his first novel, *This Side of Paradise* (1920), was published to great popular acclaim. Now that Fitzgerald was a success, Zelda agreed to marry him. The two began a gaudy, flamboyant life that helped define the excesses of the Roaring Twenties, a life Fitzgerald chronicled in his novel *The Beautiful and the Damned* (1922). He and Zelda spent much of the 1920s living in Paris, a haven for prominent American writers and artists during that time. There Fitzgerald finished his major novel, *The Great Gatsby* (1925). His last com-

plete novel, *Tender Is the Night* (1934), reflects his life in Paris.

The Fitzgeralds were plagued by troubles. They were constantly in debt because of their extravagant spending, though Fitzgerald was able to keep their heads above water by selling short stories to magazines. Many of these early stories were collected in *Tales of the Jazz Age* (1922) and *All the Sad Young Men* (1926). The couple also began to have marital problems. Fitzgerald drank heavily, and in 1930 Zelda had a mental breakdown. She spent a year in a mental hospital but suffered a second breakdown in 1932 and spent the rest of her life in various sanitariums.

By 1937 Fitzgerald was in Hollywood working as a scriptwriter, dogged by failing health and ongoing debt. He died of a heart attack on December 21, 1940, leaving his final novel, *The Last Tycoon* (1941), unfinished.

Works

Although many of Fitzgerald's short stories are still widely read, the author's name is almost synonymous with a single major novel, *The Great Gatsby*.

It wasn't very successful when it was published in 1925. One newspaper reviewer called it "negligible," and *The Independent* magazine said, "*The Great Gatsby* is not a good book." Most later readers disagree, and the book has become a modern American classic and a major document in the social history of the Jazz Age. It is also noteworthy for its witty, sparkling dialogue, its suggestive symbolism, and the author's re-creation of the racy, sophisticated speech of the period it depicts.

The novel is narrated by Nick Carraway, a member of a wealthy midwestern family. Nick has moved to West Egg, a fictional town on Long Island, off New York City. The novel recounts his experiences with the social set he finds there: his cousin, Daisy Buchanan; her husband, Tom; Jordan Baker, a golfer and friend of the Buchanans; George Wilson, who owns a garage; George's wife, Myrtle; and, most important, Nick's next-door neighbor, the wealthy and mysterious Jay Gatsby.

In large measure the novel is about the characters' secrets. At the beginning of the novel, for instance, Nick visits Daisy at her home in East Egg, a fashion-

able community. (Gatsby can see the home from his elegant mansion across the bay.) He senses tension between Daisy and her husband, Tom, and learns that Tom has a mistress; only later does Nick learn that the mistress is Myrtle Wilson and that Tom has always been unfaithful to Daisy.

Secrecy also seems to surround the identity of Nick's neighbor, Gatsby. The first time Nick catches sight of his neighbor, he is puzzled to see Gatsby looking out over the bay and extending his arms toward a green light on a dock in East Egg. When Nick attends a large, extravagant party that Gatsby throws on his lawn, he notices that Gatsby makes himself scarce, and he hears others speculating about Gatsby's background. Some think he is a spy, others that he made his fortune as a bootlegger (one who makes and sells liquor illegally—for example, during Prohibition in the 1920s). Jordan Baker tells Nick that Gatsby has long been secretly, but hopelessly, in love with Daisy. He earned a fortune and moved to West Egg so that he could be near her. He gives fashionable parties trying to impress Daisy enough to win her away from Tom.

As the story progresses, Nick is drawn into the sometimes sordid lives of these characters. Gatsby, for instance, recruits Nick to set up a meeting between him and Daisy. He also confesses his real identity and history to Nick. Nick attends drinking parties with the group in New York City hotels. At one of these parties Tom accuses Daisy of having an affair with Gatsby. He becomes enraged, and the group's car trip back to West Egg ends in a tragedy that engulfs several of the main characters.

At the center of the book is not only the figure of Gatsby but also the perceptions and reactions of Nick. Nick thinks of himself as a simple, honest midwesterner. He is disgusted by the shallowness of the sophisticated but reckless and irresponsible Long Islanders who "smashed up things." In the end, as he plans to return to the Midwest, he holds on to the memory of Gatsby's single-minded pursuit of fortune—his willingness to pursue the American dream at all costs. In this respect Gatsby mirrors Fitzgerald himself, who once wrote: "If you believe in anything very strongly—including yourself—and if you go after that thing

alone, you end up in jail, in heaven, in the headlines, or in the largest house in the block, according to what you started after." Throughout his fiction Fitzgerald explored, and often condemned, the things that people start after.

SELECTED WORKS BY
F. SCOTT FITZGERALD

All the Sad Young Men

The Beautiful and the Damned

The Great Gatsby

The Last Tycoon

Tales of the Jazz Age

Tender Is the Night

This Side of Paradise

SELECTED WORKS ABOUT
F. SCOTT FITZGERALD

Bloom, Harold, ed. *F. Scott Fitzgerald's The Great Gatsby*. New Haven: Chelsea House, 1986.

Mizener, Arthur. *Scott Fitzgerald and His World*. New York: Putnam, 1972.

WEB SITES

<<http://www.special.pioneerplanet.com/archive/fitzgerald/>>

<<http://www.sc.edu/fitzgerald/index.html>>



“ It hit me that my father had never said anything quite like that before—and I felt as if I’d at last received the paternal blessing, something I’d been waiting for for so long. ”

Olivia, in REAR-VIEW MIRRORS

Paul Fleischman {1952–}

Life

IN THE late 1970s Paul Fleischman burst into prominence as a poet, novelist, and short story writer for young readers. His nearly immediate success came as little surprise to some readers, for his father, Sid, was a well-known author of children’s books. Paul, born on September 5, 1952, in Monterey, California, quickly followed in his father’s footsteps.

While growing up in Santa Monica, California, Paul Fleischman and the rest of his family would gather to listen to the elder Fleischman read chapters of his books as he completed them. Commenting in *Fifth Book of Junior*

Authors and Illustrators about hearing his father’s work, Fleischman said, “He’s an excellent reader. The sense of beginning communicated by the rhythm of an opening sentence, the feeling of closing inherent in a chapter’s last line were unmistakable. His books brim with the pleasures to be found in the sounds of speech: dialect, forgotten turns of phrase, wonderful names for characters.” Many readers find this same gift for sound in the younger Fleischman’s work.

In the *Fifth Book* Fleischman also credited his father for his own love of the past: “Like my father, I’m attracted to the past.

From him I learned the joys of research: digging up old names, old words, old facts about how people dressed, what they ate, how they worked." This interest in probing the past for settings and story ideas is apparent in nearly all of Fleischman's work.

These two impulses—sound and setting—came together when Fleischman began publishing shortly after he graduated from the University of New Mexico in 1977. His first book, *The Birthday Tree*, appeared in 1979. It was followed by a string of award-winning books, including *The Half-a-Moon Inn* (1980), which was named a Golden Kite Honor Book, and *Graven Images: Three Stories* (1982), a Newbery Honor Book.

Works

From the beginning Fleischman favored the early, colonial years of the United States as the setting for his polished, almost mythological stories. This is the setting for *The Birthday Tree*. The title refers to the apple tree that a young boy's parents had planted when he was born. The tree seems to reflect events in the child's life; so when the boy goes off to sea, the parents sense from it a shipwreck, hunger, and thirst. Throughout

the winter they are convinced that their son is dead; but when spring comes, the tree delivers a more promising message.

While *The Birthday Tree* is a sentimental tale, *The Half-a-Moon Inn*, again set in the past, is more haunting and foreboding. Twelve-year-old Aaron sets off on a harrowing quest to find his mother, a task made more difficult by the fact that he is mute, unable to speak. Encountering a blizzard, a ragman, and a series of misadventures involving an eccentric cast of adversaries, Aaron arrives at the Half-a-Moon Inn. The inn is run by the cruel Miss Grackle, who uses her ability to read dreams in order to rob her guests.

Fleischman sealed his reputation as a gifted storyteller with the three short stories in *Graven Images*. The title comes from the sculpted figures at the center of each tale. In one a reclusive old woman is threatened with the loss of her son to the sea and the exposure of a terrible secret. Key to the mystery is a "binnacle boy," a wooden figure that houses a ship's compass.

With *Rear-View Mirrors* (1986) Fleischman showed that he is equally at home in a more contemporary setting. While taking part in a bicycle race, seventeen-year-old Olivia Tate recounts

her memories from the summer before of meeting her father, whom she had never known because of her parents' divorce. Hannibal Tate is a crusty mystery writer who likes his New Hampshire solitude and is unwilling to flatter Olivia to win her good opinion; he engages in verbal sparring matches with his equally obstinate daughter, a bold, modern young woman who has spent her life in Berkeley, California. Olivia's decision to become an archaeologist seems consistent with her ability to uncover layers of meaning as she deepens her understanding of both her father and herself.

Fleischman's interest in the sound of his work found expression in poetry as well. He describes *Joyful Noise* (1988), a series of brief poems about insects, as "poems for two voices." The lines appear in two columns. One column is meant to be read aloud by one reader, the other column by a second reader. Some lines are to be read by one voice alone, other lines by the two voices together. Through the sound of the poems readers can hear mayflies, honeybees, cicadas, crickets, and other insects as they soar, spin, drone, and creep off the page.

Reviews of Fleischman's books consistently have used

words like "chiseled," "vivid," and "elegant" to describe the author's style. In *Horn Book* magazine Fleischman acknowledged that he worked hard to create that style: "The spontaneous, joyful, serendipitous, and most satisfying side of writing for me is trying to [put stories into words]: moving this clause to take advantage of that rhyme, finding a four-syllable word for *slender*, playing with the length of sentences. Giving the sense a sound."

WORKS BY

PAUL FLEISCHMAN

The Birthday Tree

The Burning Room

Coming-and-Going Men

A Fate Totally Worse Than Death

Graven Images: Three Stories

The Half-a-Moon Inn

I Am Phoenix: Poems for Two Voices

Joyful Noise: Poems for Two Voices

Path of the Pale Horse

Rear-View Mirrors

Saturnalia

Time Train

SELECTED WORK

ABOUT PAUL FLEISCHMAN

Gallo, Donald, ed. *Speaking for Ourselves, Too: More Autobiographical Sketches by Notable Authors of Books for Young Adults*. Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English, 1993.



“ I was carelessly unwrapped like a gift no one wanted and forced to sit, my arms clasped about my knees. My captors then ignored me. They hadn’t any reason to worry about my escaping. There was no place to go.
Jessie, in THE SLAVE DANCER ”

Paula Fox {1923–}

Life

PAULA FOX once commented to another writer that when she works, “I never think I’m writing for children.” This observation might surprise some readers, for although Fox wrote several highly regarded novels for adults, she is best known for her richly layered, award-winning books for children and young adult readers.

Born in New York City on April 22, 1923, to Paul Hervey and Elsie Fox, Paula Fox survived intact an unsettled childhood. Her father wrote his own plays and rewrote the scripts of others so that they would work better onstage. Fox’s parents frequently

traveled to Hollywood and England, where her father worked for film studios, so Fox spent her earliest years living with a minister in New York State’s Hudson Valley. There she caught the writer’s bug; the minister taught her to read and to appreciate such classic authors as RUDYARD KIPLING, MARK TWAIN, and WALT WHITMAN.

When Fox was six, she went to California to live for two years. Then in 1931 she moved to Cuba to live with her grandmother on a sugar plantation, where she learned to speak Spanish. Three years later a revolution in Cuba

forced her to return to New York City. By the time she was eleven, she had attended nine schools and had spent hardly any time with her parents. She found comfort, though, in reading and in the libraries she discovered wherever she lived.

After finishing high school, Fox held several different jobs: model, saleswoman, machinist, and reader for a publishing company in England. She then turned to journalism, working in France and Poland as a reporter for a British wire service. When she returned to the United States, she attended Columbia University in New York City, though she didn't graduate. She found a job as an English teacher for Spanish speakers and also worked as a teacher of emotionally disturbed children. In 1963 she became a teacher of English literature at the University of Pennsylvania.

It wasn't until the early 1960s, after she had spent six months in Greece with her English professor husband, Martin Greenberg, that Fox launched her career as a serious writer. Her first book, for younger readers, was *Maurice's Room* (1966). She attracted the attention of critics and the public with a book for young adults, *How Many Miles to Babylon?* (1967), which deals with the harsh reali-

ties of city life for blacks. Other novels followed in quick succession. Her most admired—and controversial—novel is the Newbery Medal-winning book, *The Slave Dancer* (1973).

Works

Paula Fox has won the admiration of critics and readers for the rich clarity of her writing style. She is also admired for the complexity of her characters and the sincerity and integrity with which she draws them. Her novels cover a wide range of subjects, including alcoholism, conflicts with parents, and death. Some critics have found her work depressing. This label frustrated Fox, who said that she wanted to avoid traditional happy endings in favor of books that honestly treat tragic situations with no easy solutions.

In her work the author opts to create characters who are emotionally withdrawn and to place them in new, sometimes hostile, situations. In *Blowfish Live by the Sea* (1970), for example, nineteen-year-old Ben travels to Boston with his younger sister, Carrie, to visit his estranged father from their mother's former marriage. They discover that Ben's father is a down-and-out

alcoholic and drifter. Carrie doesn't understand her brother, especially when he decides to stay in Boston with his father. But in reaching out to Ben and supporting him, both she and Ben grow emotionally.

Fox's most highly acclaimed work is her only historical novel, *The Slave Dancer*. The novel tells the story of Jessie, a thirteen-year-old white boy, a street musician from New Orleans, Louisiana, who is kidnapped and taken aboard a slave ship bound for Africa. Jessie plays the fife (a flutelike instrument), and his job on the trip back will be to exercise the slaves (and make them more salable) by playing the fife for them to dance to. During the journey Jessie faces a number of moral and ethical tests as he encounters the hatreds among the crew, the boastfulness of the captain, and the hypocrisy of the ship's mate. The experience changes him in profound and even tragic ways. The book gives the reader a moving glimpse of the horrors of the slave trade, emphasizing the sights, sounds, and even smells of the experience.

Although *The Slave Dancer* was widely applauded for its realism and power, critics were not unanimous in their praises. Some

felt that the book portrayed the ship's slaves as "pathetic sufferers" incapable of fighting back. Critics also felt that the book seems to excuse the actions of the slave drivers. In fact, protests against the book were planned for the evening of Fox's Newbery Award ceremony. After she gave her acceptance speech, though, some of her critics approached her and offered her their support. Perhaps what changed their mind were words like these from her acceptance speech on the role of the writer:

This effort to recognize [what we feel and why] is an effort to connect ourselves with the reality of our own lives. It is painful; but if we are to become human, we cannot abandon it. Once set on that path of recognition, we cannot forswear our integral connections with other people. We must make our way towards them as best we can . . . try to particularize what is universal.

SELECTED WORKS

BY PAULA FOX

The Eagle Kite

The Moonlight Man

The One-Eyed Cat

A Place Apart

The Slave Dancer

WEB SITE

<<http://www.bdd.com/teachers/pfox.html>>



“ It’s difficult in times like these: ideals, dreams and cherished hopes rise within us, only to be crushed by grim reality. It’s a wonder I haven’t abandoned all my ideals, they seem so absurd and impractical. Yet I cling to them because I still believe, in spite of everything, that people are truly good at heart. ”

Anne Frank, in her diary

Anne Frank {1929–45}

Life

ANNELIES MARIE Frank was born in Frankfurt, Germany, on June 12, 1929. Her father, Otto Frank, was a businessman. Both he and Anne’s mother, Edith Frank, came from wealthy Jewish families that had lost their money because of poor economic conditions in Germany in the years following World War I.

Like millions of others, the Frank family was profoundly affected by the persecution of Jews in Europe before and during World War II. When Adolf Hitler rose to power in Germany in 1933, the Franks fled to Amsterdam in Holland.

They moved there because the Dutch had a strong tradition of religious tolerance.

In 1940, though, the German army invaded Holland, shattering the family’s security. In the months that followed, the Franks were increasingly alarmed by rumors and whispered reports that the Nazis were rounding up Jews and sending them to death camps. Then in 1942 Margot, Anne’s older sister, received a notice to report for transport to a camp. Otto Frank decided that the time had come for the family to go into hiding. They took refuge in the crowded quarters

behind and above his company's offices. Anne called the hideout their Secret Annexe. For two years they remained indoors, sealed off from the world behind a hidden door. At great danger to themselves Mr. Frank's business associates provided those in hiding with food and other necessities. For company Anne wrote in a diary she had received as a present for her thirteenth birthday just before the family went into hiding.

As the war dragged on, the Franks listened with hope to reports that the Allied armies were defeating the Nazis and liberating Europe. They freed Holland too late for Anne Frank and her family. On August 4, 1944, the German police discovered the hiding place and arrested the Franks and the others hiding with them. All were sent to concentration camps in Germany and Poland. In March 1945, just weeks before Germany surrendered, Anne Frank died of typhus fever at the Bergen-Belsen camp in Germany.

The only survivor of the group was Otto Frank. After the war he returned to Amsterdam. There he met with Miep Gies, one of the friends who had tried to protect the Franks. He learned that after the family's arrest Gies

had rescued Anne's diary, notebooks, and other papers from the hiding place. She gave them to Otto Frank, who at first refused to allow them to be published. Eventually, though, he relented, and an English edition appeared in the early 1950s. *Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl* survives as one of the world's most moving accounts of how Nazism and the persecution of Jews affected one family. The book has been read by millions and has been translated into at least thirty-seven languages. A play based on the diary won the Pulitzer Prize and other awards in 1956; a 1959 movie adaptation was nominated for several Academy Awards, including best picture, in 1959; and in 1997 a Broadway production of a new play based on the diary opened in New York City.

Works

The Diary of Anne Frank, as it is often called, continues to appeal to younger readers—and their elders—because of its candid, convincing portrait of a young girl's coming of age under trying conditions. The book captures the emotions of an adolescent who experiences the usual problems of growing up: miscom-

munications with her parents, awareness of changes in her own body, and uncertainty about how to behave when she is attracted to a member of the opposite sex. These themes become more pronounced in later editions of the book, which restore passages that Otto Frank had cut from the diary (and that were excluded from the 1956 play), deeming them too private for publication.

Anne addresses the diary as “Kitty.” The earliest entries detail life under the German occupation of Holland as the Franks try to go about their business and act as normally as possible. When they go into hiding in 1942, they are joined by others: Mr. Van Daan, Otto Frank’s business partner; his wife and their son, Peter; and Mr. Dussel, a dentist.

A major source of conflict to Anne is her mother. She wants to talk about her feelings with her mother, but she feels that Mrs. Frank is unsympathetic and unloving; for this reason she confides in her diary. As time goes on, Anne is transformed from a talkative, mischievous thirteen-year-old girl into a more mature and thoughtful young woman. At the center of this transformation is her growing attraction to Peter. The diary records her conversations with Peter, and Anne dis-

cusses how she should behave toward him with her parents.

As the group hears of friends who have been taken away by the Nazis, tensions mount. These tensions are worsened by repeated nighttime burglaries in the company warehouse below; the noises they hear lead them to fear they have been discovered. In the diary’s last entry before her capture Anne discusses her maturing feelings. The diary is one of the most remarkable stories of its kind for showing how hope, optimism, and faith in the essential goodness of others can survive the cruelty of war and persecution—at least in the heart of one person.

WORKS BY ANNE FRANK

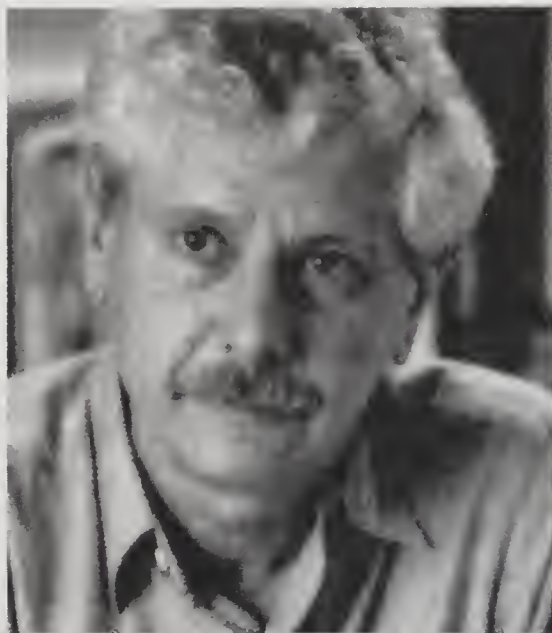
Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl
Anne Frank’s Tales from the Secret Annex

SELECTED WORKS ABOUT ANNE FRANK

Amdur, Richard. *Anne Frank*. New York: Chelsea House, 1993.
Tyler, Laura. *Anne Frank*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Silver Burdett Press, 1990.

WEB SITES

<<http://www.annefrank.com/>>
<<http://www.annefrank.nl/>>



“ [Abraham Lincoln’s] life story has been told and retold so many times, he has become as much a legend as a flesh-and-blood human being. While the legend is based on truth, it is only partly true. And it hides the man behind it like a disguise. ”

from LINCOLN: A PHOTOBIOGRAPHY

Russell Freedman {1929–}

Life

RUSSELL FREEDMAN’S parents met in a San Francisco bookstore. Irene Gordon, an aspiring actress who worked there as a salesclerk, fell into conversation one day over a stack of best-sellers with Louis Freedman, who was a representative for a major publishing company. The two married, and Russell came along on October 11, 1929, in San Francisco.

The literary influences on young Freedman in this household were strong. The family’s home was filled with books and book talk, and Freedman’s father, according to his son, was a great storyteller. Because of his father’s

job Freedman had the unique experience of meeting some of the twentieth century’s best-known authors; frequent dinner guests included JOHN STEINBECK, William Saroyan, and John Masefield. From his earliest years Freedman was an avid reader, and his two favorite books were ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON’S *Treasure Island* and Ernest Thompson Seton’s book of natural history, *Wild Animals I Have Known*.

After completing his bachelor’s degree at the University of California at Berkeley in 1951, Freedman served in the U.S. Army Counter Intelligence Corps

during the Korean War. His first writing job was as a reporter and editor for the Associated Press news service. One day Freedman came across a newspaper article about Louis Braille, who was just sixteen when he invented the Braille system, which allows blind people to read raised dots on paper by touch. He wondered if other teenagers had similar accomplishments to their credit. Out of his research was born his first book for young adults, *Teenagers Who Made History* (1961). Freedman had found his true vocation: writing nonfiction books for younger readers.

His books fall into two general categories. Most are about science and natural history. Others emphasize historical subjects and biographies.

Freedman won widespread respect for his work. His biography of Abraham Lincoln won the Newbery Medal for 1988. In 1990 his biography of President Franklin Roosevelt won the Orbis Pictus Award for outstanding nonfiction book, and his 1993 biographies of Eleanor Roosevelt and the Wright brothers (inventors of the airplane) were both named Newbery Honor Books. In 1992 Freedman won the *Washington Post*/Children's Book Guild Award for the body of his work.

Works

In an interview in *Children's Books and Their Creators* Freedman said that he disliked the term "nonfiction" because it sounded too negative. For many readers, he said, "fiction" implies something artistic and creative, while they think nonfiction is written and read more for informational purposes. For Freedman, though, a good nonfiction book "should be just as absorbing as any imaginary story, because it is, in fact, a story, too."

Freedman's vast and varied body of work began with an emphasis on people. In addition to his study of teenagers who made history, he wrote about space travel, the French writer JULES VERNE, and the inventor Thomas Edison. In 1969 he turned to science and natural history. Some of his science books are about specific animals: sharks and other sea creatures, dinosaurs, birds, rattlesnakes. Many, though, are about aspects of the animal kingdom as a whole: animal survival, how animals carry and defend their young, the games animals play, and unsolved mysteries of animal behavior, such as whether the behavior of bears predicts earthquakes.

In 1980 Freedman returned to the study of the human animal with the publication of *Immigrant Kids*. This book was spurred in part by a photographic exhibit of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century children he saw in New York City. He was impressed by the way the photos seemed to capture frozen moments of time, and he wanted to do the same in words.

Through the 1980s and into the 1990s his interest focused on the early American West, with such titles as *Children of the Wild West* and *Cowboys of the Wild West*. Both of these books shattered some of the myths surrounding the Wild West. The latter title points out, for example, that many cowboys were black or Mexican, not white, and that they rarely had a pair of six-shooters strapped around their waists. The book profiles one Texas cowboy whose provisions for working the winter range consisted primarily of a stack of novels and a cat.

Freedman's most highly regarded books are his later biographies. To write *Lincoln: A Photobiography*, he traveled to Lincoln's birthplace and to numerous historical sites associated with the sixteenth president. He was allowed to examine

a number of the president's original handwritten documents, including first-draft notes of the Emancipation Proclamation (which freed the American slaves). This meticulous research paid off and led some reviewers to suggest that Freedman's work tops the market for Lincoln biographies for young people. In accepting the Newbery Medal for the book, Freedman told his audience, "I was never tempted to write an idealized, hero-worshiping account. A knowledge of Lincoln's weaknesses throws his strengths, and his greatness, into sharper relief."

SELECTED WORKS
BY RUSSELL FREEDMAN

Eleanor Roosevelt: A Life of Discovery

Franklin Delano Roosevelt

Immigrant Kids

Indian Chiefs

Kids at Work

Lincoln: A Photobiography

The Wright Brothers: How They Invented the Airplane

SELECTED WORK
ABOUT RUSSELL FREEDMAN

Sixth Book of Junior Authors and Illustrators.
H. W. Wilson, 1989, 89-91.



“ I hear everything I write. All poetry is to me first a matter of sound. I hear my things spoken. . . . I believe, after all, that there must be a cadence, a rhythm, to all that is to be poetry at all. ”

Robert Frost, in THE BOSTON POST, February 14, 1916

Robert Frost {1874–1963}

Life

DESPITE THE fact that an established publisher did not bring out a volume of his poetry until he was thirty-nine years old, Robert Frost became one of the most popular, most honored, and most read American poets during his lifetime. The author of more than twenty books of poetry, Frost composed such widely admired, well-crafted classics as “Mending Wall,” “The Road Not Taken,” and “Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening.” Although he was born in San Francisco, California, on March 26, 1874, Frost in his poetry brought to life the rugged beauty of a different region of the

country—rural New England—and captured the lives of its people.

Frost spent his early childhood in California. After his father died in 1885, Frost, his mother, and his sister moved to Lawrence, Massachusetts. In 1892 he graduated from Lawrence High School, where he was the class poet and shared the distinction of being valedictorian with his future wife, Elinor Miriam White. He attended Dartmouth College in New Hampshire for less than one semester and then spent several years working as a school-

teacher, a mill worker, and a newspaper reporter.

In 1894 Frost earned fifteen dollars when his first published poem, "My Butterfly," appeared in a New York magazine, *The Independent*. Greatly encouraged, he self-published two copies of *Twilight*—a slim volume of a handful of poems—and gave one copy to his fiancée, Elinor. Nearly twenty years passed before he again published a collection of poems.

After marrying Elinor in 1895, Frost continued to publish poems in *The Independent* and taught arithmetic at his mother's private school. Following the birth of his son Elliott, however, he decided to return to college and secure a teaching certificate so that he could make a better living. He enrolled at Harvard University in 1897 as a special student, but he became ill and left in 1899. That same year the Frosts had a second child.

At the turn of the century Frost experienced tragedy. His young son and his mother died. A few months after Elliott's death the Frosts moved to a farm near Derry, New Hampshire, where they lived for the next ten years. The Frosts had four more children, one of whom died in infancy. Frost supported his growing family by teaching English, but

he continued to feel the pull of poetry and the creative life.

When he was thirty-eight years old, Frost made a dramatic change. Discouraged by American magazines' rejection of his poems, he left his farm and moved his family to England, where he hoped to establish his reputation as a poet. Frost sorted through and arranged poems that he had shipped to England in one of the family's trunks and submitted his manuscript to an English publisher. *A Boy's Will* was published in England in 1913, and a second collection, *North of Boston*, appeared a year later.

Following the outbreak of World War I in Europe in 1914, the Frosts decided to move back to the United States and again settle on a farm in New Hampshire. Just before Frost returned from England in 1915, American editions of his two books were published, garnering him fame and critical acclaim. For more than forty years Frost continued to build his reputation, publishing award-winning, best-selling volumes of poetry and lecturing and teaching at various colleges.

Throughout his career Frost earned numerous honorary degrees and awards. Among his many honors were four Pulitzer Prizes. He also received gold

medals for poetry from the National Institute of Arts and Letters in 1939, the Poetry Society of America in 1941, and the Limited Editions Club in 1949. In 1950 and 1959 the United States Senate passed resolutions honoring Frost's achievements, and he recited "The Gift Outright" at President John F. Kennedy's inauguration in 1961.

On January 29, 1963, Frost died at the age of almost eighty-nine in Boston, Massachusetts, as a result of complications from surgery to remove a urinary obstruction. Paying tribute to one of the nation's finest writers, President Kennedy said: "His death impoverishes us all; but he has bequeathed his nation a body of imperishable verse from which Americans will forever gain joy and understanding. He had promises to keep and miles to go, and now he sleeps."

Works

Having spent nearly all of his life in towns and farms in Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Vermont, Frost brings to life the landscape and culture of rural New England in many of his poems. For example, he describes stone walls that dot

the countryside in "Mending Wall," snow-covered woods in "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening," and an orchard at harvest time in "After Apple-Picking." In "Out, Out—" and "Home Burial" he describes how two different New England families deal with the reality of death.

Despite this focus on New England, Frost's poems appeal to readers around the world. The widespread popularity of his poetry stems in part from the universal themes and experiences he explores. He writes, for instance, about the individual's relationships to himself or herself, to others, to nature, and to the world. In poems such as "The Road Not Taken" Frost conveys the difficulties that people face in making choices. In "Mending Wall" and "The Tuft of Flowers" he examines what brings people together and what keeps them apart. "Storm Fear" expresses powerful emotions—fear, respect, awe—brought about by nature. In poems such as "Desert Places," "The Hill Wife," and "Acquainted with the Night" Frost evokes the loneliness and uncertainty of life.

Another reason for Frost's popularity is his ability to capture the rhythms of ordinary, everyday speech. He uses simple,

direct language to create a relaxed, conversational style that is authentically American. In poems such as “The Death of the Hired Man” Frost also uses dialogue to convey his characters’ speech patterns.

Much of Frost’s poetry is characterized by his use of rhyme and meter, or the regular pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables in a line, which contributes to the musical quality of his poems. For example, the lines of the well-known final stanza in “Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening” are well paced and end with the rhyming words *deep*, *keep*, and *sleep*. As he explained in *The New York Times Book Review* in 1923, “I must have the pulse beat of rhythm, I like to hear it beating under the things I write.”

Although Frost is widely regarded as a major American poet, some critics fault him for being too conservative. In contrast to many other poets of his time, he embraced traditional forms such as blank verse—unrhymed poetry with five pairs of unstressed and stressed syllables in each line—and the sonnet. While E. E. CUMMINGS, T. S. Eliot, and other twentieth-century poets experimented with innovative forms and structures, Frost often glanced back-

ward to nineteenth-century conventions. Despite his lack of innovation, however, Frost eloquently communicates enduring truths about the pleasures—as well as the grim realities—of daily life.

SELECTED WORKS BY ROBERT FROST

A Boy's Will
Collected Poems, Prose, and Plays
A Further Range
In the Clearing
New Hampshire
North of Boston
Steeple Bush
West-Running Brook
A Witness Tree

SELECTED WORKS ABOUT ROBERT FROST

Bober, Natalie S. *Restless Spirit: The Story of Robert Frost*. New York: Henry Holt, 1991.
Faber, Doris. *Robert Frost, America's Poet*. Illustrated by Paul Frame. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1964.
Munson, Gorham. *Making Poems for America: Robert Frost*. Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica Press, 1962.
Wilson, Ellen Janet Cameron. *Robert Frost, Boy with Promises to Keep*. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1967.

WEB SITE

<<http://donald.phast.umass.edu/local/amherst/walking.tour/frost.html>>



“ We the undersigned, being of sound mind and body, hereby swear to keep open minds in the face of all unexplained and unsolved crimes, believing that there are ancient and monstrous creatures still in the world. . . . ”

from MYSTERY OF THE
SECRET MARKS

Nancy Garden {1938–}

Life

LIKE MANY other writers for young adults Nancy Garden began publishing later in life after pursuing other occupations. But as with many other writers, too, the seeds for her writing career were planted very early.

Garden was born on May 15, 1938, in Boston, Massachusetts. Her family life had a strong impact on her career as a writer. Her father was an executive with the Red Cross, the international relief agency, so the family frequently moved. Garden, an only child, was often left to herself while looking for new friends in communities throughout New

York, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island. She was often sick as well. These conditions caused her to turn to books for companionship; Anna Sewell's *Black Beauty*, A. A. Milne's *Winnie-the-Pooh* books, and RUDYARD KIPLING's *Jungle Books* are listed among her earliest favorites. Both her father and her mother, a psychologist and social worker, also inspired her by telling stories. Her father spun yarns about his own youthful exploits and about made-up characters (including a fish who talked a diner out of eating him). Her mother, who encouraged Garden to use her

imagination, told stories about household folklore and her life growing up on a farm.

Garden's earliest professional ambition was the theater, a natural outgrowth, she said, of acting out the stories she read as a child. In 1961 she earned a bachelor of fine arts degree at Columbia University in New York City, and she acted in summer stock and off-Broadway plays (smaller, experimental plays not slated for Broadway proper). Realizing, though, that acting wouldn't pay the bills, she earned a master's degree in education from Columbia in 1962 and took a part-time teaching job at New York's Hunter College. In later jobs she was a writer for an editorial services company, an assistant editor on Scholastic magazines, and an editor with Houghton Mifflin.

Garden published her first novel, *What Happened in Marston*, in 1971. The story was inspired by the widespread urban race riots of the 1960s. That year she also published a nonfiction book, *Berlin: City Split in Two*, which deals with the division of Berlin, Germany, by the victorious Allies at the end of World War II. In the decades that followed she wrote numerous other fiction and nonfiction books for young adults.

Garden's efforts took a new

direction in the 1970s, when she traveled extensively in Europe, especially in Wales and Scotland. There she became interested in Celtic myths and the occult. The result of this interest was two series of novels. One, called the Fours Crossing sequence, deals with the occult in a small New England town. The other series is called Monster Hunters, in which a group of preteens investigates mysterious events.

Works

Nancy Garden's books for young adults fall into two broad categories. One includes realistic books that examine some of the difficult problems modern teenagers face: issues of race, drug abuse, homosexuality, suicide, and the like. The other category is fantasy, including the Fours Crossing sequence and the Monster Hunters series. Also belonging in this category is some of her nonfiction, books that examine the history and beliefs surrounding the occult—for example, *Vampires* (1973), *Werewolves* (1973), *Witches* (1975), and *Devils and Demons* (1976).

Typical of Garden's problem books is *Peace, O River* (1986). While the book appears to exam-

ine the issue of nuclear-waste disposal, its more fundamental concerns are social class and bringing about social change. Sixteen-year-old Kate Kincaid lives in the affluent community of River View, Massachusetts. River View has carried on a long-standing feud with a nearby working-class community, Hastings Bay. When reports spread that a nuclear-waste dump will be located in Hastings Bay, the feud worsens. Kate and a friend from Hastings Bay take action to try to heal the division between the two communities, but their efforts fail, at least initially, as violence breaks out.

Among Garden's realistic books, *Annie on My Mind* (1982) has attracted the most attention—good and bad. Annie and Liza are two young women attending different colleges who reflect on the consequences of their sexual relationship during high school. Many critics praised the book, with its controversial topic, as pioneering; one called it “gut-level believable.” However, the book also became the center of a storm of controversy when a Kansas school board removed it from the schools' libraries, believing that adolescent homosexuality was an unsuitable subject for younger readers.

The case went to trial in federal court, and as a result of the judge's 1995 decision *Annie on My Mind* was restored to the schools' libraries.

Garden's fantasy books are for readers with different tastes. The Fours Crossing series is set in motion when thirteen-year-old Melissa arrives in Fours Crossing, New Hampshire, to live with her grandmother after the death of her mother. There she becomes friends with Jed, and it soon becomes clear to the two that something mysterious is preventing spring from coming to the town. Behind the mystery is a sinister hermit who captures and imprisons the two young people. Later books in the series continue the saga, as Melissa and Jed continue to do battle with the evil hermit, who is intent on using ancient rituals and magic to destroy the town.

SELECTED WORKS
BY NANCY GARDEN

Annie on My Mind

Dove and Sword

Lark in the Morning

My Sister, the Vampire

Peace, O River

Prisoner of Vampires

What Happened in Marston



“ I wasn’t going to America for riches. I was going to find my father—to ask him how he could leave me behind, his own flesh and blood. I wasn’t sure whether I loved him or hated him, but I had to find the answer. ”

Loi, in SONG OF THE BUFFALO BOY

Sherry Garland {1948–}

Life

SHERRY GARLAND’S writing career began when she awoke one morning in 1979 from a vivid dream set in sixteenth-century France. She set to work writing out the dream and wound up with a 250,000-word historical novel. She never sold it to a publisher, but the experience convinced her that she wanted to be a writer.

As with most writers, though, the roots of Garland’s career run deep. She was born on July 24, 1948, in McAllen, Texas, a small town in the Rio Grande Valley. Although her parents were poor tenant farmers—

and Garland was their ninth child—her early life was rich in imagination. She said she was an outdoor child who turned her surroundings into palaces and chariots and spent her days and nights making up detailed stories about them.

Garland’s parents stressed the value of education. In high school Garland was an honors English student driven by a favorite teacher and a love of such classic authors as SHAKESPEARE, MARK TWAIN, and William Faulkner. Her first public writing success came when her school essay “Why I Love

Texas” won a contest. At seventeen Garland had made her first sale, and the prize money helped her attend college.

In 1971 Garland graduated with honors from the University of Texas. In the years that followed she wrote poetry and short stories, but she never tried to sell any of her work to publishers. Instead, she was employed throughout the 1970s and most of the 1980s as a librarian, later as a secretary. Then came the dream, and Garland knew what she wanted to do. Her first published books were two adult romance novels she wrote under a pseudonym. She felt limited writing romance novels, so she tried her hand at a novel for young adults, *Where the Cherry Trees Bloom*. The publishing company that accepted the manuscript went out of business before it was printed, but the book was published in German in 1991.

In the meantime Garland had been working with Vietnamese immigrant families in Texas, serving as a friend and adviser. She had learned a great deal about Vietnamese culture, so when she spotted an advertisement seeking someone to write a social studies book about Vietnam, she submitted a proposal—and got the job. The result was

Vietnam: Rebuilding a Nation, published in 1990.

Works

A striking feature of Garland’s books is the way they grow out of her everyday experience. Her popular book *Best Horse on the Force* (1991) resulted from a conversation she had one day with a Houston police officer who explained to her the special demands made on police horses. Out of this conversation she formed the idea for a story about two boys, Brandon and Wayne, who hang around the police stables doing odd jobs. When a rookie police officer starts playing practical jokes on them, they decide to turn the tables on him, with frightful consequences both for the officer and his horse, Skyjacker.

With *Song of the Buffalo Boy* (1992) Garland turned to a more serious theme, one that grew out of her day-to-day work with Vietnamese people. Seventeen-year-old Loi is an Amerasian, a child left behind by an American soldier after the war in Vietnam. Because of her mixed race Loi is an outcast in her village, though she takes comfort in a photograph of her mother holding her

and standing next to a mysterious blue-eyed man in a uniform. When she is promised in marriage to a cruel army officer, she flees to the capital city, where she is forced to survive on the streets. She applies to come to the United States; but when she finally gets the opportunity to leave, she is faced with a tough decision: whether to remain in the country she loves or leave in hopes of finding her father.

Garland continued to write about the Vietnamese community in *The Shadow of the Dragon* (1993). Sixteen-year-old Danny Vo is caught between two worlds; while he fits in with his American friends, they don't understand his Vietnamese home life, ruled by his tradition-bound grandmother. A clash between these two cultures erupts when Danny tries to date a white girl over the opposition of her brother and his racist, skinhead friends, leading to a hate crime that forever changes the lives it touches.

The Silent Storm (1993) took root when Garland watched a hurricane pummel her Texas home. In the novel thirteen-year-old Alyssa struggles to get home to Galveston Island, Texas, where she lives with her grandfather and his mustang horses. When she reaches the house, she finds her

grandfather severely injured by the hurricane ravaging the home. Making the task of helping him more challenging is that Alyssa cannot speak: She has been left mute by the trauma of witnessing her parents drown at sea during a similar storm three years earlier. To help her grandfather, she first has to confront and overcome the memories of that horrific event.

With *Indio* (1995) Garland extended her interest in the American Southwest to Native-American history. The novel's protagonist is fourteen-year-old Ipa-tah-chi, a survivor of a raid by another Native-American tribe who killed her grandmother and took her older brother hostage. Her life is further changed when Spanish conquistadors, invaders who led the conquest of Mexico and Peru in the late 1500s, ride into her village, capture her, and sell her into slavery in a silver mine.

SELECTED WORKS
BY SHERRY GARLAND

Best Horse on the Force

Indio

Letters from the Mountain

The Shadow of the Dragon

The Silent Storm

Song of the Buffalo Boy



“Black love is Black wealth. . . .”
from “NIKKI-ROSA”

Nikki Giovanni {1943-}

Life

IN THE late 1960s Nikki Giovanni gained widespread notoriety after she published two collections of poetry—*Black Feeling, Black Talk* (1968) and *Black Judgement* (1968)—that reflected her outspoken, sometimes angry commitment to the ideals of revolution, black power, and civil rights. Their success raised her to prominence as one of contemporary America’s leading black-activist artists, alongside such writers as Amiri Baraka, H. Rap Brown, and TONI CADE BAMBARA.

Little in Giovanni’s early upbringing suggested that she would become an activist writer.

She was born Yolanda Cornelia Giovanni on June 7, 1943, to college-educated parents; her father was a probation officer, her mother a social worker. Her middle-class childhood was a happy one. She spent her earlier years with her close-knit family in Cincinnati, Ohio, suburb and her teens with her grandmother in Knoxville, Tennessee, where she had been born. As a teenager Giovanni’s political outlook was conservative; she supported the presidential candidacy of Republican Barry Goldwater in 1964 and was strongly influenced by the conservative philosophy

of the novelist Ayn Rand.

Two major influences on Giovanni's future writing career were her grandmother and her parents. From her grandmother she learned to appreciate and admire the accomplishments of the black community. From her parents she learned the art of storytelling. She described her father as an amateur student of ancient myths and her mother as a romanticist. From their love of stories, she said, she learned to appreciate the rhythms of oral storytelling.

In 1960 Giovanni enrolled in Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee. After a disagreement with a dean she was asked to leave, but she returned in 1964 and graduated with honors in history in 1967. Throughout her college years she was politically active. For example, she helped restore the university's chapter of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee, a campus civil-rights organization dedicated to peaceful social change. During these years she was adopting more radical ideals, largely under the influence of a roommate and the growing community of 1960s political activists and writers. She documented her changing political awareness in her first collections of poetry.

A key event in Giovanni's life was the birth of her son, Thomas, in 1969. She told *Harper's Bazaar* magazine that motherhood changed her priorities: "I just cannot imagine living without him. But I can live without the revolution." This alteration in the author's life was reflected in the subject matter of her poetry. After the 1970s her poems, including three collections for younger readers, focused less on activist ideals and more on family love, domestic issues, childhood, and exploration of what it means to be a black woman in the United States.

As the years went on, Nikki Giovanni also received honorary keys to several cities—where her ancestors might very well have had to use separate entrances.

Works

Opinions on the quality of Giovanni's poetry have been divided. Many readers admire her poetry because it captures the realities of black experience. Some critics have described it with words like "evocative," "expressive," and "singing." They recognize the author's reliance on an oral tradition and point to the strong rhythm-and-blues pulse in many

of her poems. Giovanni has her negative critics, though. Some critics have used words like “self-conscious,” “strained,” “artificial,” “superficial,” and “contrived” to describe the language of her poems. Despite these reservations, Giovanni’s books have sold well and have been turned into sound recordings. Many readers believe that her collections for young readers accurately portray the perspectives of children and young adults.

Most of Giovanni’s poetry is brief and relies, she said, on “capturing the moment.” She noted in an interview in *Black Women Writers at Work*, “I don’t do a lot of revisions because I think if you have to do that then you’ve got problems with the poem. . . . A poem’s got to be a single stroke, and I make it the best I can because it’s going to live.”

Her three collections for young readers have in common the author’s effort to instill racial pride in young black people while at the same time re-creating the wonder and beauty of childhood for all readers.

Spin a Soft Black Song (1971) depicts the lives of black children from infancy to age ten. Some of the poems examine the child’s perspective on rules imposed by grown-ups, often humorously;

others deal with the possibility of growing up to be strong and wise. All of the poems suggest universal childhood feelings without sentimentality and condescension.

Ego Tripping (1973) is directed at somewhat older readers, dealing with weightier subjects such as loneliness, private dreams, love, and survival. While a few of the poems reflect the author’s earlier militancy, most are gentler in tone and take a more melodic approach. *Vacation Time* (1980) re-creates childhood adventures, and the best poems in the collection capture the thoughts and images of children: a child watching bubbles in the bathtub or explaining why he likes chocolate and scary movies, little girls tiptoeing through a strawberry patch, a little boy who laments that he cannot climb the sky.

SELECTED WORKS

BY NIKKI GIOVANNI

*Ego Tripping and Other Poems
for Young People*

Spin a Soft Black Song: Poems for Children

Vacation Time: Poems for Children

SELECTED WORK

ABOUT NIKKI GIOVANNI

Fowler, Virginia C., ed. *Nikki Giovanni:
An Introduction to Her Life and Work*.
New York: Macmillan, 1992.



“ I hear the rhythm of the words,
and it comes to my imagination
much more easily in poetry
than prose.”

from an interview with Mel Glenn

Mel Glenn {1943–}

Life

WHEN MEL Glenn discussed literature with his high school English students in New York City, he knew firsthand what he was talking about. Beginning in the 1960s he was not only an educator but also a respected poet and novelist.

Glenn was born on May 10, 1943, in Zurich, Switzerland. He grew up in Brooklyn, New York. He had a conventional childhood, following the Brooklyn Dodgers baseball team and shooting baskets with friends at the local park. He carried in his mind a dominant picture of his father—sitting at the dining-

room table writing in English, Yiddish, German, or Hebrew on yellow legal pads. Glenn believed that it is from his father that he inherited the desire to write.

Glenn's earliest professional ambition was journalism. As a college student at New York University he wrote feature stories and columns for the student newspaper and covered sporting events at Madison Square Garden in New York City. But after graduation in 1964 he found his true vocation while serving in the Peace Corps. For two years he taught English in a small town in Sierra Leone, a country

in West Africa. There he discovered that despite disease and monsoons he loved classrooms, the reports he had to mark, and, most importantly, the students.

Returning to the United States, Glenn earned a master's degree in 1967 at New York's Yeshiva University and taught at a junior high school. In 1970 he enjoyed a homecoming of sorts when he accepted a job teaching English at Brooklyn's Abraham Lincoln High School—from which he had graduated.

In contrast to the experience of many other authors, success came quickly to Glenn. In 1980 another teacher showed him the manuscript of a book he had written, leading Glenn to conclude that he, too, could write a book. He put himself on a strict schedule and completed *Class Dismissed! High School Poems* (1982) in just six months. The book was accepted by the first publisher he sent it to—a sound decision, since it was selected as one of the Best Books for Young Adults by the American Library Association and won a Golden Kite Award. Glenn went on to write several more collections of poetry. He also wrote young adult fiction, including *One Order to Go* (1984) and a pair of sports books for children.

Works

As a teacher Glenn was touched each day by real-life stories, some tragic, some happy, which he tried to tell in his books. He pointed out that although fashions may change, teenagers are connected over the years by common concerns: feeling alone or different from others, falling in love, disagreeing with parents.

Like all of the author's poetry, the poems in his three "Class Dismissed" books—*Class Dismissed!*, *Class Dismissed II* (1986), and *Back to Class* (1989)—are written in everyday language using free verse (poetry that doesn't rhyme or follow a particular rhythm). Each poem is written from the point of view of an individual student, expressing that student's distinctive voice and the feelings and problems he or she faces: One is angry because her brother committed suicide; another is terrified of going to the board during math class; a third feels at home only on the baseball diamond.

In his later books Glenn provided more of a story line to tie the poems together. In *My Friend's Got This Problem, Mr. Chandler* (1991) the focus is on a high school guidance counselor and the students and parents he meets

in the course of one week. The reader in effect eavesdrops while Mr. Chandler talks with students and parents about problems teenagers may face: parents who don't care, feeling too tired to study because of a part-time job, a parent's unemployment, the pain of a broken love relationship.

The story line becomes more important in *Who Shot Mr. Chippendale?* (1996). The book's subtitle, *A Mystery in Poems*, suggests that the book is like a novel. One morning Robert Chippendale, a high school English teacher, is shot and killed on the school's track. As authorities search for the murderer, readers come to know some of the students and teachers whose lives he has touched, again in brief poems that express each character's outlook. One girl claims to have had an affair with him; another says that he helped her overcome a problem with alcohol; a Hispanic student is bound for college because of "Mr. C.'s" encouragement; one boy failed the teacher's class and is glad to see him dead. As the mystery deepens—and as the story moves toward its uncertain conclusion—readers gain a deeper understanding of some of the problems students face.

Violence is at the core, too, of *The Taking of Room 114* (1997)—

only this time the source of the violence is a teacher. The book is set during one of Mr. Wiedermeyer's last history classes of the year. His senior students are stunned when their teacher, toting a gun, holds them hostage in their classroom. The suspense builds as teachers, administrators, and the police try to resolve the crisis and make sense of the bitter notes the disturbed teacher slips under the door. In the meantime each of Mr. Wiedermeyer's seniors gives voice to five poems. These poems expose the dreams, secrets, and fears of these students, who think that their lives may be ending. Some poems express the viewpoints of others who are witnessing the crisis unfold.

SELECTED WORKS BY MEL GLENN

Back to Class

Class Dismissed! High School Poems

Class Dismissed II: More High School Poems

My Friend's Got This Problem, Mr. Chandler

One Order to Go

The Taking of Room 114

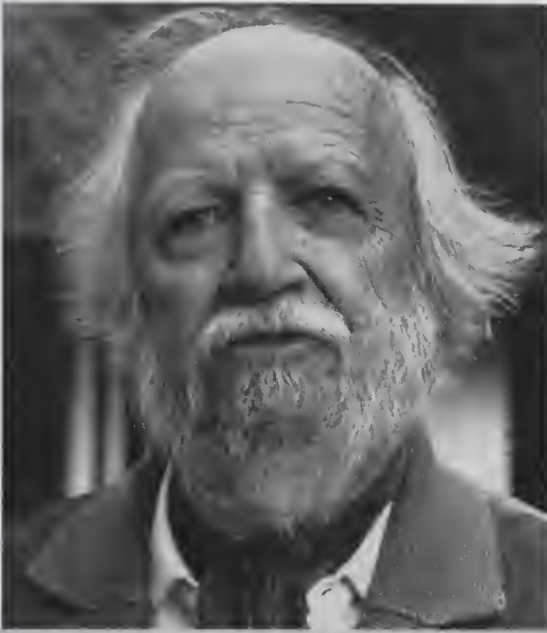
Who Killed Mr. Chippendale?

A Mystery in Poems

SELECTED WORK ABOUT MEL GLENN

Lesene, Teri S. "A Passion for Poetry:
An Interview with Mel Glenn."

Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy,
March 1997, 502.



“ I am very serious. I believe that man suffers from an appalling ignorance of his own nature. I produce my own view in the belief that it may be something like the truth. ”

from “THE WRITER IN HIS AGE”

William Golding {1911–93}

Life

WILLIAM GOLDING was born September 19, 1911, in Cornwall, England. His father was an elementary-school teacher and principal, and his mother was active in the women’s suffrage movement. When still young, William became interested in Greek literature but was not interested in becoming a writer. On entering Oxford University, Golding chose to study physics. More than two years later he realized his interests were not in science but in English literature, to which he switched his course of study.

When he was twenty-three, Golding published his first work

entitled *Poems*. Graduating from the university, Golding “wasted the next four years” (his own words) writing, acting, and producing plays for a small theater company in London, England. At twenty-eight, Golding married Ann Brookfield and gave up his fledgling literary career to teach at Bishop Wordsworth’s School in Salisbury, England. When England became involved in World War II, Golding enlisted in the Royal Navy, where his views of humanity changed.

On entering the navy, Golding had believed that humans were essentially innocent and that

social structures such as government and religion benefited humanity. As a lieutenant on a missile launcher, however, he saw the atrocities of war. Golding no longer believed that even children are innocent, but rather that they are persuaded through social customs to *pretend* that they are innocent. Golding found that it was often the dark and guilty nature of humans that prevails, and he began to question the nature of the individual, society, and human good will.

Golding remained in the navy until the end of the war in 1945. He then returned to his teaching and began to write again. In 1954, when Golding was forty-three years old, his first novel, *Lord of the Flies*, was published in England and the next year in the United States. Golding went on to write other books as well as plays, essays, and book reviews until his death on June 15, 1993, from a heart attack.

Critics often said that Golding produced some of the finest writings of the 1950s and 1960s and was the most significant novelist in postwar English literature. In 1983 Golding was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature. He was named a knight in 1988. While many of his books and essays are held in

high regard throughout the world, it is *Lord of the Flies* that is recognized as Golding's major work.

Works

Human behavior and how individuals act in particular situations are the major themes in all of Golding's works but are most notable in *Lord of the Flies*. Many readers compare Golding's works with fables, parables, allegories, or morality tales—literary forms in which a story or character is used to teach the reader a lesson with particular values. Scholars, however, consider *Lord of the Flies* much more complex. It questions the values of societies in which good will and humanity are only superficial and seem to disappear in difficult situations.

Set on a deserted tropical island, *Lord of the Flies* tells the story of English boys who survive a plane crash. Shot down while trying to escape a nuclear war that has ravaged the world, the boys find the pilot dead. At first delighted with the possibility of no adult supervision, the boys soon find that they must make difficult decisions about how to live while waiting and hoping to be rescued.

Lord of the Flies has five main characters, who represent the people who inhabit the world, according to Golding. The hero is Ralph, who is elected leader by the rest of the boys because of his physical size and appearance and because he asks how the group should govern itself. He sets up a democracy in which the boys share leadership and everyone is able to voice his opinion. The most intelligent and logical of the group—the intellectual—is Piggy, who lacks a mature or responsible nature. Jack is Ralph’s antagonist, or competitor. He is the character most closely linked with the symbols of flies and dung. His cruelty without remorse illustrates the worst part of human nature. Simon, who represents moral reason, is compassionate and sensitive, and Roger is Jack’s follower and Simon’s opposite.

Dividing tasks and devising ways in which they can survive on the island, the boys eventually form allegiances to Ralph or to Jack. These leaders come to represent Golding’s ideas about the nature of human government and the individual. Ralph is intent on containing the flies and what they represent in this story—primitive nature—while Jack finds them fascinating and studies them.

Ultimately, *Lord of the Flies* is a struggle between a more ordered civilization and a more primitive means of survival. It portrays people regressing to anger, fear, and brutality when they find themselves outside the value systems of civilized societies. Simon is the only character who does not regress toward a more brutal state. He maintains his compassion but pays a price for doing so. At the end of the story the boys are rescued, but the reader continues to wonder about the human capacity for brutality.

Written with elaborate symbolism and vivid imagery, the suspenseful story was twice made into a movie.

SELECTED WORKS
BY WILLIAM GOLDING

Free Fall
The Inheritors
Lord of the Flies
Pincher Martin
The Pyramid
Rites of Passage
The Scorpion God
The Spire

SELECTED WORK
ABOUT WILLIAM GOLDING

Kulkarni, Pralhad A. *William Golding*
(*A Critical Study*). New Delhi: Atlantic
Publishers and Distributors, 1994.



“ I want to show that love in my writing. But I can never quite say what I mean. Maybe life's too big to fit on paper. Or maybe my pencil's too short. ”

Helen, in her diary in PHOENIX RISING: OR HOW TO SURVIVE YOUR LIFE

Cynthia D. Grant {1950–}

Life

CYNTHIA GRANT said that from an early age she found magic in words and their ability to create worlds on paper. Professionally, she never wanted to be anything other than a writer for young readers—and she succeeded in that goal.

Grant was born on November 23, 1950, in Brockton, Massachusetts. By high school she was living in Palo Alto, California. Her junior high and high school years were an important source of material for her novels. In her books she used her vivid memories of the emotions and experiences of those years, in

particular the way that kids at school could be cruel to anyone who is different: smarter, physically handicapped, or cursed with an unfashionable hairstyle.

Grant started writing seriously in 1974, and “writer” is the only job she ever held. Her first books were written for juvenile readers. With *Big Time* (1982) Grant turned to young adult readers, and through the 1980s and 1990s she wrote a string of successful novels for this audience. Perhaps her most popular book was *Phoenix Rising: Or How to Survive Your Life* (1989), which won awards from the Michigan

Library Association; PEN, the writers' association; and the Detroit Public Library.

Works

One distinguishing element of Cynthia Grant's books is her vivid characterization. Grant relies in particular on odd, bizarre, or troubled—but thoughtful—teenagers who don't conform to any stereotypes. Usually, these characters find some way to overcome the obstacles thrown their way and transform their lives.

Each of Grant's novels provides good examples of such characters. *Big Time* features nine-year-old Missy, who dreams of a career in show business, pushed by her ambitious stage mother. In *Hard Love* (1983) the novel's protagonist, Stephen, is only seventeen years old, but he believes he is in love with an older woman. His best friend, Paulie, is a disturbed character who is losing touch with reality and headed for self-destruction. At the center of *Shadow Man* (1992) is eighteen-year-old Gabe, an alcoholic, high school dropout. Before the novel begins, Gabe is killed when he wrecks his pickup truck. Gabe's high school journal, though,

reveals a bright student who might have moved beyond his abusive background if he had had the chance. Interior monologues—that is, dramatic representations of a character's thoughts and feelings—by those who were close to Gabe show that their reactions to his suicide have changed them for the better.

Mary Wolf (1995) tells the story of a girl forced to live with her family in a recreational vehicle after her father loses his job. As he fails to find another, he becomes angry and abusive, leading to tragedy when Mary takes the only action she can to protect herself and her brother from the effects of their father's despair.

Another distinguishing feature of Grant's novels is their grim humor in showing the toughness of these characters as they cope with their problems. *Kumquat May, I'll Always Love You* (1986), for instance, tells the story of Livvy, a high school senior, who has lived alone in a large, isolated house for two years. She misses her mother and cleverly, sometimes comically, covers up her mother's absence by buying the supermarket romance novels and shades of lipstick her mother would have bought.

In *Keep Laughing* (1991) a boy named Shep uses bitter

humor to cover the hurt he feels because his absent father is more interested in himself and his career as a comedian than in the son. Shep jokes, for example, that he long thought his father, whom he saw on television, was only six inches tall.

Grant's best book is perhaps the award-winning *Phoenix Rising*, which one reviewer called "a candid, sensitive portrayal of the grieving process." The novel features Jessie, a teenage girl who begins to have panic attacks after the death of her eighteen-year-old sister, Helen, from cancer. Jessie tries to remain cool, hiding her grief behind humor and toughness. She is tormented, though, by nightmares in which she repeatedly relives her sister's death. A therapist tries to help Jessie deal with her dreams, but she resists his help, believing that a seventy-year-old man can't possibly understand what's going on in the mind of a seventeen-year-old girl. So the dreams get more frequent and more frightening. Ironically, Jessie is convinced that the only person who could possibly help her fight her terror is the one person out of her reach: Helen.

Then Jessie discovers the diary Helen had kept during the final months of her life. The surviving sister decides to read a

piece of it each day. The diary details not only Helen's feelings as she deals with the disease and her chemotherapy treatments but also the usual concerns of a high school senior: her relationship with a boyfriend, her plans after graduation, her desire to be a writer, the blue dress she buys for the prom.

As Jessie reads, layer after layer of her beloved sister unfolds before her. She learns about the secret inner life her sister had lived, the part of her sister that she couldn't know or understand while Helen was alive. In the diary Grant uses Helen's distinctive voice to re-create her love for her family and friends and her wry sense of humor. Jessie achieves a kind of bittersweet joy as she realizes that through her diary Helen is still there to help her. Through Jessie Helen lives on—just as the mythological bird, the phoenix, creates a new life out of the ashes of its old life.

SELECTED WORKS
BY CYNTHIA GRANT

Keep Laughing

Mary Wolf

*Phoenix Rising: Or How to Survive
Your Life*

Uncle Vampire



“ ‘I’m insane, I’m crazy, you don’t expect me to be *normal* do you?’ ”

Deborah, in I NEVER PROMISED YOU A ROSE GARDEN

Joanne Greenberg {1932–}

Life

A NOVELIST and short story writer, Joanne Greenberg is best known for her autobiographical novel *I Never Promised You a Rose Garden* (1964), which she wrote under the pseudonym Hannah Green. Greenberg was born Joanne Bernstein in Brooklyn, New York, on September 24, 1932. Little is written about her childhood, but it is generally known that Joanne was placed in a mental institution as a teenager after attempting suicide. She was diagnosed with schizophrenia, a mental disorder that characteristically causes the patient to confuse reality and

fantasy. After undergoing therapy, Greenberg left the institution and attended American University, where she studied anthropology. She married Albert Greenberg when she was twenty-three, and they had two children, David and Alan. She originally published *I Never Promised You a Rose Garden* under an assumed name because she did not want her young children to know that she had been institutionalized as a teenager.

Greenberg went on to write a number of novels and short stories under her married name and became an adjunct profes-

sor of anthropology at Colorado School of Mines. She was awarded honorary doctorates from several universities, including Gallaudet College and the University of Colorado. Greenberg won the Denver Public Library Book Plate Award in 1990 and the Colorado Book Award for fiction in 1991 for *With the Snow Queen*.

Works

Joanne Greenberg wrote many novels under her own name, but it is *I Never Promised You a Rose Garden*, the book written under the pen name Hannah Green, that is most often read by adolescents. Written as a novel, *I Never Promised You a Rose Garden* is Greenberg's account of being a patient in a psychiatric hospital. While other books depicted schizophrenia from the doctor's point of view, Greenberg's *Rose Garden* was the first book to portray the patient's account of being schizophrenic. Greenberg wrote from the patient's point of view so realistically that readers realized this book wasn't totally fiction.

Called a naturalist in her writing because *Rose Garden* presents the real traumas of

severe mental illness, Greenberg invites readers into Deborah Blau's world in the hospital. Committed because she attempted suicide, sixteen-year-old Deborah is diagnosed with schizophrenia and spends three years in the hospital undergoing therapy. Her therapist, Dr. Fried, attempts to woo Deborah away from her fantasy world, the Kingdom of Yr, where the commitment to life is not required. Yr is a place where Deborah does not have to face the disappointments of the world. Dr. Fried challenges Deborah to give up Yr and its enticing promise of death and return to the world where there are no promises of rose gardens and perfect justice, only a chance to live in reality. Serving as guide whom Deborah can question and eventually accept, Dr. Fried gently helps Deborah return from insanity.

I Never Promised You a Rose Garden became a best-seller in 1964 even though critics thought it was "flawed" as a novel because of its focus on schizophrenia rather than on the characters themselves. However, looking at the book as nonfiction, critics praised it as a painful and sensitive case study that deals honestly with mental illness and the eventual return to reality.

The book appeals to many teenagers because of Deborah's confusion and alienation—her sense of feeling apart from human society. They sense or recognize the character's struggles with sickness. They seem to identify with Deborah's coming to see that often others' lives are really not as easy as they seem.

The themes of alienation and difficult communication appear in a number of other works by Greenberg. *In This Sign* (1970), *Rites of Passage* (1972), *Of Such Small Differences* (1988), and *No Reck'ning Made* (1993) contain characters who must deal with deafness or blindness or characters who suffer in isolation. *Rites of Passage*, a collection of short stories, is considered one of Greenberg's finest works. This collection showcases a young boy whose need for a father is so great that he agrees to commit murder to gain the trust of the man he wishes to please. *In This Sign* explores the struggles of a deaf couple with a hearing daughter. On the surface it seems a book about deafness, but it is more about what separates people from one another—the walls they put up around themselves. It is also about how people can break

down those walls. In *No Reck'ning Made* the main character, Clara, struggles with poverty and an ideological stance that brings her into conflict with society about the purpose of public education. Clara, who has become the principal of a large school, questions the changes that have taken place between the 1930s and 1970s. She is isolated in her beliefs and finds her life as a public figure falling apart. Based on these works and others, critics warn that Greenberg's stories often veer toward tragedy yet contain so much for the reader to ponder that they are well worth reading.



SELECTED WORKS

BY JOANNE GREENBERG

I Never Promised You a Rose Garden

In This Sign

The Monday Voices

No Reck'ning Made

Of Such Small Differences

Rites of Passage



“ I am bothered by injustice toward other people. . . . The first thing we do to destroy another human being is verbal. I destroy you by calling you things that take your personhood away from you. ”

Bette Greene

Bette Greene {1934-}

Life

BETTE GREENE was born on June 28, 1934, in Memphis, Tennessee, and grew up in a small town in the Arkansas Delta, where, because she was Jewish, she learned what it meant to be different. After high school Greene attended the University of Alabama for one year, transferred to Memphis State University for two years, and then completed a fourth year at Columbia University in New York City. In 1959 she married a doctor, Donald Sumner Greene. They made their home in Brookline, Massachusetts, and had three children.

Working first as a journalist and then for the American Red Cross, Greene began to publish for young adults in her thirties. Her first book, *Summer of My German Soldier* (1973), is autobiographical, including incidents and people from her own life in Arkansas.

Works

Summer of My German Soldier takes place in Arkansas during World War II and depicts the life of a young Jewish girl, Patty Bergen, and how she

comes to terms with her parents' abuse and rejection, as well as with her feeling of isolation from her community. Patty offers safety to German prisoner-of-war Anton, who has escaped the prison camp near her home. Patty comes to care for Anton and is later devastated by what happens to him once he leaves her. When the community realizes that Patty helped this German soldier, she is an embarrassment to other Jews and is treated like a criminal by her parents.

This book questions the treatment of all people. Within the story Patty also becomes aware of the treatment of the Negroes in her town. She finally realizes she must be true to her own beliefs regardless of the circumstances.

Summer of My German Soldier gained immediate acclaim on publication in 1973. The book received numerous awards, including recognition by the *New York Times* and the American Library Association. Greene wrote the screenplay for *Summer of My German Soldier*, which was made into a television movie.

The acclaim for the book did not, however, come without negative reviews by some critics. They questioned the depth

and credibility of the characters, stating that some were stereotypes that lacked complexity. Others questioned whether the book is anti-Semitic because of the portrayal of Patty's father, who was abusive. Greene dismissed this claim as incomprehensible because she, too, was Jewish.

Greene went on to write *Morning Is a Long Time Coming* (1978), the sequel to *Summer of My German Soldier*. It tells of Patty's journey to Europe, where she meets Anton's mother. This novel was made into a television movie in 1978.

A Greene book that sparked much controversy is *The Drowning of Stephan Jones* (1991), which deals with the issues of homosexuality, hatred, and oppression. In an article for *The ALAN Review*, which specializes in young adult literature, Greene terms Stephan one of the "designated victims" in our society.

The book, based on an actual incident, is the story of Stephan Jones, who is brutalized for being homosexual. His tormentors go unpunished, and the reader is left to question the value of all life and the injustice that accompanies those designated as victims in this society. As with Greene's

first novel critics also questioned the credibility of the characters in this novel. Stephan, some critics say, seems stereotypically homosexual; consequently, these critics wonder if Greene sufficiently challenges the beliefs readers may have about homosexuals. Greene does offer, however, a positive perspective on a homosexual relationship and shows readers the tragedy that may result from intolerance.

Before writing the book, Greene interviewed over four hundred people who had been either a victim or a perpetrator of a hate crime. The result is the realistic depiction of Stephan Jones's circumstances and of the hatred that many young adults face by being different.

Greene's books examine the moral courage and emotional tolerance young people face in difficult situations. The author asks young readers to think about their own intolerance and capacity for moral courage. Her books have remained popular since their first publication, suggesting that while critics question her skill at characterization, young people find great value in her works.

SELECTED WORKS
BY BETTE GREENE

Morning Is a Long Time Coming

Summer of My German Soldier

The Drowning of Stephan Jones

Them That Glitter and Them That Don't



Rosa Guy {1928–}

Life

HAILED AS a novelist, short story writer, playwright, and editor, Rosa Guy is best known for her adolescent novels about the black experience. Rosa Guy's novel *The Friends* (1973) relates the story not only of Phyllisia Cathy but also perhaps of Guy herself. Guy was born in Diego Martin, Trinidad, on September 1, 1928, although some reports say she was born in 1925. She came to the United States when she was seven and grew up in Harlem, a predominantly black part of New York City. Shortly after arriving in the United States, Guy's mother became

“ ‘And one more thing. That girl Phyllisia is my friend. My best friend. If anybody hits on her, they hitting on me. And that goes for if I'm here or if I ain't. Or if I'm early or if I'm late.’

Edith, in THE FRIENDS

I had no intentions of becoming friends with Edith.”

Phyllisia, in THE FRIENDS

ill. Guy and her sister Ameze were sent to live with cousins, where she was influenced by their involvement in the black freedom movement. Her mother died, and Rosa and her sister returned to their father's home in Harlem. He died a few years later, leaving Guy and her sister orphans. Guy felt the experience of being orphaned so young affected the way she saw the world. She felt she was always an outsider looking in, a feeling that may have influenced her career choice as a writer.

At fourteen Guy quit school to take care of her older sister,

who had become ill. She started working in a factory in New York's garment district and became active in the human-rights movement. Guy married in her early twenties and had one son. Dividing her time between working, family, and education, Guy attended night classes at New York University and became involved with the American Negro Theater, which fostered the talent of black playwrights, actors, and producers. In 1950, when Guy was in her twenties, she felt writing and storytelling best suited her. She joined a support group of writers and actors through the American Negro Theater.

Through her writings Guy often focused on teenage experiences and on exciting characters with universal appeal. Guy felt that her stories about these people would allow younger readers to know about others and to laugh, to despair, and to be glad and angry with them. She felt that young people in the United States knew too little about Harlem or other inner cities of the country. In other words, Guy thought that young readers would not only have an emotional experience reading her books but also gain an education. Guy won numerous awards: the American

Library Association's Best Books for Young Adults for *The Friends* in 1973; *School Library Journal's* Best of the Best Books in 1979 for *The Disappearance*; the Parent's Choice Award for Literature for *New Guys Around the Block* (1983); and the Other Award (England) for *My Love, My Love; or, The Peasant Girl* (1985).

Works

Of all Guy's books it is *The Friends* for which the author is most praised. Set in Harlem, New York, *The Friends* traces the relationship of two girls, Phyllisia and Edith. Phyllisia is from the West Indies, and her father is a strict disciplinarian who does not want his daughters befriending the wrong type of person. Edith is the wrong type. Coming from a home where there is neither father nor many material resources, Edith steals in order to get school supplies that she and her siblings need. Phyllisia does not like Edith even as Edith tries to befriend her.

Phyllisia has no other friends, however, and is tormented by the other students for her snobbery and attention to schoolwork. As some of the other students begin to beat up Phyllisia after school one day, Edith appears and drives

them off. Finding refuge in Edith's company, Phyllisia is still uncomfortable with befriending Edith and tries to find other friends and ways to avoid Edith's company. Eventually, in spite of their different upbringings, social status, and family situations, Phyllisia comes to value Edith's strength and friendship.

The Friends became part of a trilogy that also includes *Ruby* (1976) and *Edith Jackson* (1978). *Ruby* is the story of Phyllisia's older sister, who feels cut off by her classmates and becomes involved with another student, Daphne. Daphne is a beautiful and arrogant young woman who also has difficulty with her classmates. Their subsequent homosexual relationship fills a longing in both girls yet is short-lived when Ruby's father questions their relationship. *Edith Jackson* explores the experiences of Phyllisia's friend Edith, who lives in poverty and is torn between independence and responsibility for her two sisters. Written with West Indian dialect, the three novels give the reader a sense of what Guy's own adolescence in Harlem might have been like.

One of Guy's finest novels and first-prize winner at the Cabourg, France, book festival in 1988 is *My Love, My Love; or, The*

Peasant Girl. Based on "The Little Mermaid" by Hans Christian Andersen, this is a modern fable set on a Caribbean island.

Desiree, a black peasant girl, saves Daniel, the son of one of the wealthier families on the island. Desiree and Daniel then fall in love. Desiree's peasant background is unacceptable to the island aristocracy, so Daniel agrees to marry someone from his own class. On the day of the wedding Desiree tries once more to reach Daniel. Her act brings about disaster. As with many of Guy's writings, this fable is full of rich detail and strong, insightful, and realistic characterization.

SELECTED WORKS

BY ROSA GUY

Bird at My Window

The Disappearance

Edith Jackson

The Friends

My Love, My Love; or, The Peasant Girl

Ruby: A Novel

SELECTED WORK

ABOUT ROSA GUY

Guy, Rosa. "Young Adult Books: I Am a Storyteller." *Horn Book*, March/April 1985, 220.



“Can we be friends, Lauren? Can we talk like we used to? . . . Not just Middle Earth and time travel and poetry. Other things—things nobody knows, nobody understands. Stuff I’ve never told anyone, stuff that’s just eating me up inside.”

*Spencer, in THE WIND
BLOWS BACKWARD*

Mary Downing Hahn {1937–}

Life

MARY DOWNING Hahn knew from an early age that she wanted to be a writer of children’s books, but she didn’t score her first success until she was over forty.

Hahn was born on December 9, 1937, in Washington, D.C. By the time she entered high school, she had discovered her love of writing and drawing. These twin loves led her to major in both English and the fine arts at the University of Maryland. After graduating in 1960, she taught art at a Maryland junior high school, but she disliked the role of teacher and resigned after just a year. She then toured

Europe, returned home and got married, worked in a series of low-paying jobs, and finally enrolled in graduate school, earning a master’s degree in English from the University of Maryland in 1969.

After working as an artist for a television program, Hahn in 1975 settled into a job as a children’s librarian in Laurel, Maryland. The job gave her the chance to read widely and talk to parents and children, and she credited it with getting her started on her writing career. After three years and seven rewrites she published her first book, *The Sara*

Summer, in 1979. Her later books came a little easier; but not until 1991, with the publication of her twelfth book, *Stepping on the Cracks*, did she gather courage to give up her library job so that she could devote full time to writing.

Her third novel, *Daphne's Book* (1983), won several major awards and was named an American Library Association's Reviewer's Choice; *Stepping on the Cracks* won several awards, including the Scott O'Dell Award for Historical Fiction.

Works

Hahn's novels, most of which are geared toward middle-grade readers, fall into three sometimes overlapping categories: (1) realistic problem novels that explore the troubled personal and family relationships of the characters, (2) suspenseful adventure tales and thrillers, and (3) stories with elements of the supernatural. Critics agree that all the books share a gift for vivid characterization and an elegant, practiced writing style.

Daphne's Book is an early realistic novel. It tells the story of Jessica, whose seventh-grade teacher chooses her to be Daphne's partner in the class's

Write-a-Book contest. Jessica is dismayed, for all the kids in the class think Daphne is strange. But as Jessica spends afternoons working with Daphne and her little sister, Hope, she begins to see beneath Daphne's surface, and the two develop a deep friendship. Jessica also discovers that Daphne is burdened with a tragic secret about her family life, which Jessica promises never to betray. But when that secret becomes a serious threat to Daphne and her sister, Jessica is torn between keeping her word and protecting her new friend.

For older readers the moody and romantic *The Wind Blows Backward* (1993) tells the story of Lauren, a high school senior who has a chance to revive an old relationship with a popular boy named Spencer. Spencer is unhappy, though, and Lauren is alarmed by his dark moods and reckless behavior. At first she believes she can make him happy by loving him. But as she learns that Spencer is unable to control his emotions, she understands that she has to force him to confront a man who is haunting him.

With *The Dead Man at Indian Creek* (1990) Hahn branched out into adventure fiction. This novel tells the story of Matt and

Parker, who discover a body in a nearby creek. When they learn that the man's death was drug-related, they begin to suspect that Parker's mother was somehow involved with his murder. *Following the Mystery Man* (1988) is a cleverly plotted mystery thriller about a girl who fantasizes that a man who rents a room in her grandmother's house is her father. By the time she recognizes signs that he is a thief, she becomes the victim of a kidnapping. *The Spanish Kidnapping Disaster* (1991) is about three children who unexpectedly join their parents on their honeymoon in Spain. When one of the children lets drop an exaggerated comment about the family's wealth to the wrong person, the three are kidnapped, leading to danger and suspense.

Hahn's most popular novels are those that include elements of fantasy and the supernatural. Among the best of these is *Wait Till Helen Comes* (1986), which one critic called "a gripping and scary ghost story." Molly and Michael miss their life in the city when they move with their mother and her new husband, Dave, to a converted church in the country. Molly, in particular, is unhappy because she has to

share a room with Heather, Dave's whiny, sulky daughter, whose mother had died in a mysterious fire. One day the little girl wanders into an old graveyard behind the church and becomes obsessed with a small tombstone that bears her own initials—H.E.H. Heather develops a strong bond with the ghost of H.E.H., a girl named Helen whose mother died in an 1880s fire as mysterious as the one that killed Heather's mother. Only Molly believes that Helen is more than an imaginary playmate and tries to prevent her from leading Heather to her doom.

SELECTED WORKS
BY MARY DOWNING HAHN

Daphne's Book
The Doll in the Garden
Following the Mystery Man
The Spanish Kidnapping Disaster
Stepping on the Cracks
Time for Andrew
The Time of the Witch
Wait Till Helen Comes
The Wind Blows Backward

SELECTED WORK
ABOUT MARY DOWNING HAHN

A Visit with Mary Downing Hahn.
Kit Morse Productions. New York:
Houghton Mifflin, 1994. Videocassette.

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Dickinson, Emily — Hahn, Mary Downing

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Hall, Lynn — Knowles, John

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Koertge, Ron — Meyer, Carolyn

Volume 6:

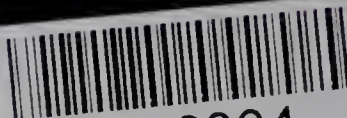
Miklowitz, Gloria — Rodowsky, Colby

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Rylant, Cynthia — Temple, Frances

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Thesman, Jean — Zindel, Paul



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